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MEMOIRS OF THE
DUKE DE SAINT-SIMON.



Louis XIV.

MEMOIRS OF THE DUKE DE SAINT-SIMON

AN ABRIDGED TRANSLATION WITH NOTES

BY
FRANCIS ARKWRIGHT

With Four Illustrations in Photogravure

IN SIX VOLUMES
VOL. II

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DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH 192

THE ROYAL ISLAND IN THE GARDEN OF VERSAILLES . . . 400

From a contemporary print. J. Rigaud *delin.* "It consists of two large pieces
of Water, surrounded with a pleasant Grove. The largest Basin is 360 feet
long and 180 feet broad; in the middle of this water there was formerly an
Island, which gave name to the Place. The largest Spout rises 47 feet, the
smaller ones 44 feet. This place is decorated with several Statues, and 2 large
Vases of Marble."

MEMOIRS OF THE DUKE DE SAINT-SIMON

VOLUME II

CHAPTER I

1702

Death of Vatteville—His crimes and adventures—The King of Spain wishes to join his army in Italy—Discussions in the Council—Harcourt—His character and secret ambition—The King determines not to admit him to the Council—I am received in the Parliament as a Peer—Promotion of officers on a large scale—I find myself passed over—I consult Marshals de Lorge and de Duras—They advise me to retire—My indecision—I consult other advisers—Their unanimous opinion—I send my resignation to the King—He conceals his displeasure, and names me to hold the candle during his prayers—He shows his annoyance in other ways—I am excluded from Marly

THE year began with a number of balls at Versailles, many of them masked. Madame du Maine gave several in her room where she was lying in bed, because she was with child ; it was a rather curious spectacle. There were also balls at Marly, but these, for the most part, were not masked. The King witnessed several performances of sacred plays, such as *Absalom*, *Athalie*, and so on ; they were given in Madame de Maintenon's rooms, and the principal parts were played by the Duchess of Burgundy, the Duke of Orleans, the Count and Countess d'Ayen, the young Count de Noailles, and Mademoiselle de Melun, who was admitted through the influence of the Noailles family. Old Baron, an excellent actor, instructed them and acted with them. These performances were strictly private, very few spectators being admitted outside the Royal Family.

Longepierre had been banished from the household of M. du Maine for promoting a marriage between the Count

de Toulouse and Mademoiselle d'Armagnac¹; the young lady and her mother, for the same reason, had been for some time excluded from all court entertainments, and nothing but the King's friendship for the Grand Equerry had relieved them from the deep disgrace they were in. About this time Longepierre came back, and produced a very singular play called *Electra*, which was acted in a magnificent theatre in the house of the Princess of Conti at Paris. Monseigneur and all the Court went to see it more than once. The piece had no love intrigue in it, but it was full of interesting situations, and the other passions were well represented. I fancy it had been written in this manner in hopes that the King would see it; but he did not, and it was not acted outside the Hôtel de Conti; Longepierre would not allow it to be performed elsewhere. He was a scheming rascal, with a good deal of wit and insinuating manners; he assumed a very deceptive outward show of philosophic indifference, but he never missed a chance of thrusting himself into anything which seemed to afford him opportunities for pushing his fortune. He contrived to obtain admission to the household of the Duke of Orleans, where we shall see him again; but eventually, in spite of all his tact and artfulness, he betrayed his real nature in a disgraceful way, and was ignominiously turned out. Among other things, he knew a good deal of Greek, and his morals were similar to those of the ancient Greeks.

The death of the Duchess de Sully deprived the balls of the best and most graceful dancer of those times, the Chevalier de Sully, her second son. The King still made him dance, though he was rather beyond the age for it. The Duchess was a daughter of Servien, Superintendent of Finance, the former owner of Meudon, where he spent such enormous sums. She was poor, although she had had 800,000 livres when she married, and had subsequently become an heiress. But Sablé, her brother, though handsome and clever, had ruined himself by the lowest and nastiest debauchery; and her other brother, the Abbé Servien, was never distinguished for anything but his depraved morals and his Italian propensities, which often got him into very unpleasant scrapes. So come to an end, speedily and often shamefully, those families of rich and

¹ Daughter of the Grand Equerry.

powerful Ministers, who seem in the days of their fortune to have established their houses for all eternity.

Lopineau, a clerk employed by Chamillart, had disappeared for more than three weeks. Though one of the chief clerks, he was a polite and good-natured man; and though he had long been employed in the Department of Finance, his hands were perfectly clean. He had gone out walking in Paris by himself, and never returned; his body was eventually found in the river, near the bridge of Neuilly. The poor man had apparently been seized by villains and imprisoned in hopes of a ransom; at last they had murdered him and thrown him into the river. Though every effort was made to find the criminals, nothing was ever discovered.

The death of the Abbé de Vatteville caused less sensation, but his life was so extraordinary that it deserves mention. He was a brother of the Vatteville who was Spanish Ambassador in London, and had the celebrated quarrel with the French Ambassador about precedence. The Vattevilles are a family of quality in Franche-Comté. This one became a Carthusian monk early in life, and was afterwards ordained priest. He was very clever; but his disposition was wild and impetuous; he could not long submit to the rigid observances of his order, and sought to make his escape. He contrived to provide himself with ordinary clothes, a pistol, and some money, and to have a horse ready for him at a little distance. His Prior suspected something; with a master-key he opened Vatteville's cell, and found him in secular clothing just about to get over the wall with a ladder. The Prior gave the alarm; Vatteville, with the greatest coolness, shot him dead, and made his escape.

After a journey of two or three days he stopped to dine at a wretched inn in the open country, for he avoided populous places as much as he could. He asked what food there was in the house; the landlord replied that there was a leg of mutton and a capon. "Very well," said the unfrocked monk, "put them on the spit." The landlord ventured to remonstrate; he said it was too much for one person, and he had nothing else in the house; but Vatteville grew angry, said he supposed he could have what he liked by paying for it, and he was hungry enough to eat it all; so the host had to give way. Presently another

traveller arrived and wanted dinner; the landlord told him he had nothing but what was roasting, and that was already ordered. The traveller asked how many the party consisted of, and was much surprised to hear that it consisted of only one person; he proposed that he should join him at dinner, paying his share of the expense. The landlord told him that from what he had seen of Vatteville he doubted whether he would agree. The traveller then went to the room where Vatteville was, and very civilly asked if he might share his dinner. Vatteville refused, a dispute arose, which soon became heated; to make my story short, Vatteville treated the new arrival as he had done his Prior—that is, he drew his pistol and shot him dead. Then he went on quietly downstairs, and, disregarding the terror of his host, sat down to dinner and ate up the leg of mutton and the capon, leaving nothing but the bones. After this he paid his bill, mounted his horse, and got clear out of the country.

Not knowing what to do with himself, he went to Turkey, where he submitted to circumcision, assumed the turban, and enlisted as a soldier. His renunciation of Christianity was in his favour, he distinguished himself by his courage and ability, and became a Pasha. The Turks gave him the command of their forces in the Morea, where they were fighting the Venetians. Vatteville took several towns, and acquired the confidence of the Turks to such a degree that he thought he might turn it to good account, and extricate himself from a position which was not altogether comfortable. He had means of communicating with the Venetian Government; he sent them word that he would put them in possession of several fortresses, together with the secrets of the Turks, if they would bring him, drawn up in due course, the Pope's absolution for his murders, apostasy, and other crimes; his assurance of safety from the Carthusians; his restoration to all civil rights, and to the priesthood; and power to hold any ecclesiastical benefice. The Venetians were willing enough to meet his views. The Pope thought that, in the interests of the Church, he ought to concede the Pasha's demands. Vatteville received the documents he required, and when he had made sure that they were in proper form, he carried out his share of the bargain, after which he made his escape to the Venetian army. Afterwards he went to Rome, where the Pope re-

ceived him kindly ; and, being now assured of his safety, he returned to his family in Franche-Comté, where he amused himself by mocking the Carthusians.

These singular adventures drew public attention to him when Franche-Comté was conquered for the first time. He was recognised as a man of ability and resolution ; he entered into relations with the Queen-Mother and the Ministers, and rendered useful service at the time of the second conquest of Franche-Comté. But he did not serve for nothing ; he had stipulated beforehand that he should be appointed Archbishop of Besançon, and when the conquest was completed he was nominated to that see. The Pope, however, could not bring himself to approve of the appointment : he said Vatteville was a murderer and a circumcised apostate. The King agreed with the Pope, and made a compromise with Vatteville ; he gave him the Abbey of Beaune, the second-best in Franche-Comté, another good abbey in Picardy, and divers other advantages. After this Vatteville spent his time between his abbey of Beaune and his own estates ; he rarely appeared at Court, where he was always received with distinction.

Wherever he was, he kept a good cook and a pack of hounds, entertained freely, and put himself under no constraint with regard to women. He lived like a great *seigneur* of the old school, held in great fear and respect ; he was a tyrant to the people on his estates, and sometimes to his neighbours. The King's Intendants had express orders from the Court to let him do as he liked so long as he lived ; they dared not remonstrate with him, nor even object to the taxes which he imposed as he pleased within his own territories. He delighted in paying visits now and then to the Carthusians, to show his pleasure at having cast off their gown. He lived in this way, with the same licence and in the same consideration, till he was nearly ninety years old.

About this time Villars made a rich marriage. His bride was the beautiful Mademoiselle de Varangeville, younger sister of the wife of Maisons, *Président-à-mortier*, who was also handsome, but not so agreeable. They had no brother, and eventually Madame de Villars came in for their whole fortune, for the only son of Madame de Maisons died young ; so that, with the riches which Villars himself had amassed,

their fortune was immense. Varangeville came from Normandy. His birth was extremely obscure ; his wife was the daughter of Courtin, so well known as an Ambassador, whom I have mentioned more than once.

The great question of the day was to come to a decision with regard to the proposed expedition of the King of Spain to Italy. It had been first suggested by Louville, who knew more of Spanish affairs than any one, and he had secured the approval of M. de Beauvilliers and Torcy. Louville was a man of sense and ability, but eager and impetuous ; and when he had once taken anything into his head it was impossible to stop him. His vivacity sometimes led him into indiscretions, and he committed some when making his report to the King concerning Spanish affairs. He spoke freely of the condition of Spain, and also of some considerable personages in that country. As he was ordered to give the King an account of his grandson's wedding, he could not avoid mentioning the disrespectful conduct of the Spanish ladies at supper, the childish tears of the Queen—everything, in short, which I have related concerning the marriage. Besides that it was his duty to tell the King these things, it would have been useless to attempt to conceal them ; for they were known, among other persons, to Madame des Ursins and Marchin, who would not dare to omit them in their letters. But Louville spoke to the King in the presence of Madame de Maintenon, and, moreover, the King told her all that passed at his private interviews with him.

Louville owed his position to the Duke de Beauvilliers ; he was an intimate friend of Torcy, and on good terms with the Duke de Chevreuse. In his report, and in answer to the King's questions, he went into minute details respecting a number of things, which, owing to his absence from ill-health and other causes, were either unknown, or only superficially known, to the Duke d'Harcourt. All this alienated the Duchess of Burgundy, to whom it was insinuated that Louville had done some bad turns to the Queen, her sister. Several of her ladies, who, either to please Madame de Maintenon, or in consequence of some court intrigues, were enemies of M. de Beauvilliers, raised an outcry against Louville, and all M. d'Harcourt's friends joined in the chorus.

We have seen the hatred of Madame de Maintenon for

the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers, which was all the stronger because she had tried to get rid of them and failed. We have also seen the affection she bore to M. d'Harcourt, and its impure but powerful source. That skilful courtier had already profited by it, and hoped to turn it to still better account. It was not so much his ill-health as his schemes for the future which had made him resign his post of Ambassador. His reception by Madame de Maintenon was encouraging; he felt that he must not allow her favourable disposition to cool. She took him by the hand and acted as his guide throughout. Under the pretext of Spanish affairs she procured him frequent interviews with the King, and by her advice he sometimes ventured to touch upon other affairs than those of Spain, and was listened to favourably.

The Chancellor was hardly less in disgrace with Madame de Maintenon than Beauvilliers and Torcy. He had offended her while he was at the head of the Finance Department, and his removal from that office had not brought about a reconciliation; all the less because he never made any overtures to her, and always showed marked contempt for his successor, Chamillart, and his financial operations; and Madame de Maintenon was the avowed patroness of Chamillart. So it was that, out of four Ministers who composed the Council, she had only one on whom she could depend; for this reason she wished Harcourt to become a member of it, and tried to accustom the King to him, by providing frequent opportunities for conversations, which sometimes turned into consultations. She had brought about an intimate acquaintance between him and M. du Maine; she had also put him on a good footing with the King's confidential valets, and with Chamillart. On his part, by suppleness and a respectful but carefully guarded manner, he had overcome the rough surliness of M. de la Rochefoucauld, in whom envy was innate, and who hated the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers without knowing why. He had also won over the few persons who had private access to the King, and thus prepared the way for himself. It was clear to everybody that he was a rising man, and rising in a manner which had hitherto been denied to men of quality. That is quite sufficient to attract friends in a Court; to be on friendly terms with him soon became a mark of destination.

Such was the position of M. d'Harcourt at Versailles ; at Madrid it was equally favourable. The King of Spain had taken a fancy to him during the journey from St. Jean-de-Luz to Madrid, and during Harcourt's short sojourn there as Ambassador. He had confided to him his wish to go to Italy, and begged him to use his influence with the King, his grandfather ; he wished Harcourt to accompany him in a military capacity, and act as his adviser during the campaign. Such favours overpassed the limits—not of Harcourt's ambition, for it had none—but of the particular road which he had marked out for himself. What he wanted was a seat in the Council ; he did not care at all to go as adviser to the King of Spain on a campaign in which Villeroy and Vaudemont would be the chief commanders. But his position was embarrassing, for he wanted to keep a return to Spain open to him as a last resource, in case he found too many obstacles in his way to the Council ; and he did not wish to offend the King of Spain either by refusing his offer or by openly opposing his expedition. It was necessary, in his own interests, to oppose it ; but he had to do it in such a way that his action would never be discovered—no easy task, especially under the eyes of a shrewd and penetrating observer like Louville. The latter was thoroughly convinced that the King of Spain ought to go to Italy, and his mission was to obtain the consent of our Court. He was strongly supported by the Duke de Beauvilliers, by Torcy, and even by the Chancellor, whom he had convinced by his arguments, though he was on bad terms with M. de Beauvilliers, and inclined, as a rule, to take the side opposed to him.

Harcourt, though his manners were extremely winning and polite, was in reality the haughtiest and most contemptuous of men ; he was, however, wise enough to ask advice of others, partly to please them and win them over, partly in order to appropriate whatever good there might be in it and pass it off as his own. He was very clever ; his mind was capacious and exact, yet it was supple and versatile, and could adapt itself easily to circumstances ; his wit was graceful and fascinating. His most ordinary conversation was delightful ; no one was better company ; he was pleasant in his manners, easy of access, anxious to be all things to all men ; in this way he had become extremely popular everywhere, and had acquired a great

reputation. He spoke on serious matters with an easy and natural eloquence; he could express himself in a manner which carried away his hearers, and was invariably forcible and dignified. It did not do to trust him too far, however, if his personal interests were mixed up in any way with what he was discussing. He was capable of employing the most audacious and subtle sophistries, he knew how to give them an air of simple truth, and how to throw dust in people's eyes by some bold interrogation, or, if it suited his purpose, by some absurd incongruity. Though he made no parade of virtue he contrived to convey the impression that he was full of probity and zeal for the public welfare; but these qualities were not more than skin-deep. He managed very cleverly not to be found out; but if by any chance he did find himself in an awkward position he got out of it with a joke, a good story, or a contemptuous remark; in short, he passed it off with effrontery, and went on pursuing his own object as before. He knew how to combine, in a most extraordinary way, the airs and language of the most fashionable court society with a soldierlike frankness and freedom of manners, and the contrast enhanced the value of both. He was always upright and candid when he had no reason to be otherwise; but, if his interests required it, he could be insincerity personified, for he was always thinking of himself and his personal designs. He was naturally light-hearted; he worked easily, and was never disturbed by any uneasiness, either in his cabinet or during a campaign; he was never impatient, never fussy, never gave himself airs; always hard at work, yet always seeming as if he had nothing to do. To sum up; he was a very capable man, with a clear, judicious, and enlightened mind; but he was greedy, and actuated only by motives of self-interest; he cared only for himself, and was faithful to no one else; his probity was not above suspicion; and his whole character was warped by the wildest and most boundless ambition.

He had been clever enough to persuade the King that no one knew so much about Spain and Spanish affairs as he did, though in reality he had spent but a short time at Madrid, and had had few opportunities of making himself acquainted with them. But he made the King believe all that he told him; and it suited Madame de Maintenon's designs that the King should take him at his own valua-

tion. Between Harcourt and Louville, the King was in great perplexity ; to put an end to it he had recourse to an expedient which, in the eyes of the Court, was a new and startling phenomenon. He ordained his Ministers—that is, M. de Beauvilliers, Torcy, and Chamillart—to meet at the Chancellor's house to discuss the question of the King of Spain's expedition to Italy, and report to him ; and Harcourt was ordered to attend and take part in the deliberations. Such a meeting of Ministers had never been held before, except as a regular Council in the King's presence ; but what was most astonishing was to see an outsider admitted to the meeting, and, above all, a *seigneur* ; for, up to the present, to be a *seigneur* was an absolute and insurmountable disqualification. Such a distinction drew all eyes to Harcourt ; he was looked upon as having broken the spell, and certain to be admitted to the Council almost immediately.

In favour of allowing the King of Spain to go to Italy, it was urged that it was unbecoming for a young, able-bodied Prince to remain in idleness while the whole of Europe was arming to attack or defend his Crown ; that his personal reputation would be tarnished for ever ; that, considering his recent arrival in Spain and his want of acquaintance with that country, it would be absurd to say that he must remain there in order to superintend public affairs ; that he must be careful not to imitate the three last Kings of Spain, who had never left the immediate neighbourhood of Madrid, but, on the contrary, must follow the example of Charles V, and educate himself by making acquaintance with the different countries and races of men over whom he was destined to reign. No King of Spain, it was said, except the last three, had ever refrained from taking the field in person ; and the example set by our own King was not forgotten. It was further argued that it was important for a young King, the founder of a new dynasty, to show himself at Milan, and especially at Naples, and gain popularity there by a judicious distribution of favours with his own hand.

To these arguments it was replied that it would be dangerous for the King to leave Spain so soon after his arrival ; that the care of his person would be an embarrassment to the army of Italy ; that his journeys must necessarily be attended by an amount of pomp and show which

would cost a great deal of money, and that, in the present state of the finances, it would be better spent for more necessary objects.

Louville, through M. de Beauvilliers and Torcy, had no difficulty in replying to these objections ; but the question was discussed at very great length. Harcourt, whose personal interests were vitally concerned, spared no pains to prevent the expedition, and he was backed up by Chamillart. M. de Beauvilliers and Torcy were opposed to him, and they had almost succeeded in converting the Chancellor to their views, for he now cared little for Madame de Maintenon's displeasure. He had always been attentive to Monseigneur, and, while at the head of the finances, had done him many good offices. Harcourt, who left no stone unturned, had begun to make friends of the two Lislebonne sisters, and had had some conversations with Monseigneur ; but that Prince had been already won over by Louville. He loved the King of Spain, he felt that his wish to go to Italy was founded on good reasons, and that his personal reputation was at stake ; he, therefore, gave his cordial support to the expedition. The King approved of his grandson following the example set by himself ; but the wishes of Madame de Maintenon and Chamillart still kept him in a state of indecision.

About this time the King was meditating the great promotion of General officers, and he wished to make some Marshals of France at the same time. It is certain that he drew up a list with his own hand ; it contained four names, those of Rosen, Huxelles, Tallard, and Harcourt ; he meant to make only these appointments. He was having frequent conversations with Harcourt just then ; he said something to him about the project of making some new Marshals. Harcourt was anything but pleased at the project of becoming one ; he knew that in that case he would be sent on active service, and being, as he thought, on the point of admission to the Council, he did not wish to be removed to a distance. He, therefore, persuaded the King not to make any. It is not easy to understand how a man of his ability could make such a blunder, but his vanity led him to boast of what he had done to the Marquis d'Huxelles, perhaps in answer to some questions on the subject. Huxelles, astonished and indignant, said : " By —, if you had not already secured your dukedom you would

have taken very good care not to do it," and turned his back on him in a rage.

While these intrigues were going on, Harcourt, though to all appearance perfectly well, kept complaining of insomnia, nocturnal colics, and other ailments which make no outward show, in order to have an excuse ready in case he should be asked to go on active service. In the meantime, Chamillart, whether warned by his friends the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers, or from his own observations, began to open his eyes to the risks he would incur by the admission of Harcourt to the Council. He saw that, once admitted, Harcourt would soon wish to take the lead; that, being an experienced soldier and well acquainted with all military details, he would be a dangerous opponent in anything concerning the War Office; and that it would be difficult to resist a man of his enterprising disposition, backed up by the favour and powerful support of Madame de Maintenon. He therefore thought seriously of getting rid of Harcourt by making him a Marshal of France and sending him on active service in that capacity. But he found the King already indisposed by Harcourt's arguments, and it is said that something happened by pure chance which finally put an end to the proposed promotion of Marshals. I say "it is said," because, although I have every reason to believe that the story I am about to relate is true, I am not in a position to guarantee its truth absolutely.

This is the story. The Duchess of Burgundy, by her pretty ways, and her flattering and amusing manners, had become very familiar with the King and Madame de Maintenon, and took all sorts of liberties with them. One evening she was amusing herself by turning over the King's papers, which were arranged on a little table in Madame de Maintenon's room; and among them she found the list of four Marshals of France. Her eyes filled with tears, she cried out to the King that he was forgetting Tessé, who would die of grief, and so would she. She made a point of showing her affection for Tessé, because he had concluded the peace with Savoy and arranged her marriage; and she saw that it pleased the King, for that reason. The King, on this occasion, was really vexed at her seeing his papers; but whether he had already resolved not to make any Marshals, or whether he was determined not to promote

Tessé, he told the Princess, with some emotion, not to trouble herself, for he intended to make no new Marshals.

During all this time the King of Spain was writing continually to the King about his Italian expedition ; time was slipping away ; it was necessary to come to a decision. Chamillart had been quietly drawn away from Harcourt ; he now yielded to the King's wishes and abandoned the opposition which he had offered on financial grounds. The expedition was approved of, and Louville was despatched to the King of Spain with the news. Then Harcourt saw that he had irretrievably lost the favour of the King of Spain, and must give up all hope of returning to that country in case of necessity. He had concealed his opposition as long as possible, but the conference at the Chancellor's house had forced his hand, and he knew Louville would take care to let the King of Spain know the whole truth. He determined, therefore, to profit by the present occasion and redouble his efforts to enter the Council. Whether his vanity betrayed him, or whether he thought it a clever stroke of policy to overawe those of whom he was really afraid, I cannot say ; but he began, with an air of haughty self-confidence, to make jokes about the fright Ministers were in lest he should enter the Council. They could not sleep for uneasiness, he said, while he, on the contrary, never woke the whole night through. He had the imprudence, or the bad policy, to say so to Louville, during the last days of his stay. What Harcourt said respecting the Ministers was true, no doubt ; but people were not certain about the tranquillity of his own sleep. His interviews with the King continued on the same footing, until his overweening audacity at last put an end to his hopes for the time.

He had made a point of always opposing the counsel given by Ministers ; he now began to speak freely to the King about them, and to show his contempt for them more openly ; he even ventured to point out abuses, and propose reforms. One day the King was laying stress on some opinion pronounced by his Ministers ; Harcourt contradicted it strongly, and went so far as to say that those people were incapable of understanding anything. That speech put an end to his conversations with the King, and closed the half-open door of the Council to him. The King was always a zealous supporter of men whom he had

chosen; he had no intention of changing his Ministers; and he saw that if Harcourt were admitted to the Council it would become the scene of perpetual wrangling and quarrels, such as had formerly annoyed him in the time of Louvois and Colbert.

Spanish affairs had been by this time thoroughly discussed. Since the King had decided not to make Harcourt a Minister there was no longer any reason for consulting him about other matters; the private conversations, therefore, ceased. Madame de Maintenon tried in vain to bring Harcourt back into favour; the King had made up his mind, and would have no more private interviews with him, but in other respects he treated him well, even with distinction. Harcourt was in despair at the change; he had carefully avoided the offer of a Marshal's bâton as a dangerous snare; he had lost the favour of the King of Spain; and now he saw himself disappointed of the great prize which he had so long desired, and which had seemed to be within his grasp. Madame de Maintenon, for her own reasons, was no less disappointed; but she consoled him by the prospect of other opportunities of which he might avail himself with better fortune, not to say with more wisdom.

This winter I was received in Parliament as a Peer. The King had long since laid down a rule that no Peer should be received without his permission, and he never gave it to any one under the age of twenty-five, except in the case of his natural sons; he wished to make a distinction between them and other Peers. I was aware of it, and, under the pretext of negligence, I purposely refrained from asking permission till I was more than a year beyond the prescribed age. Before taking my seat I had to call on the First-President, Harlay, who overwhelmed me with expressions of respect; on the Princes of the Blood, and on the bastards. M. du Maine made me repeat the appointed day, and then said, with an air of gratification, tempered by politeness and modesty: "I will make a point of attending; I am too sensible of the honour you do me in wishing me to be present to miss it," and with innumerable compliments he reconducted me as far as the garden; for the King was at Marly, and I had been invited on this occasion. The Count de Toulouse and M. de Vendôme replied with more simplicity, but seemed equally pleased at my asking

them, and were equally polite and careful to pay the usual attentions.

Since Cardinal de Noailles had received the Roman purple he no longer attended Parliament, because he had no rank there except according to the seniority of his peerage. I took the opportunity of inviting him at his public audience. "You know," he said, "that I no longer have any place there." "But I know you have a very good one, sir," I replied, "and I have come to beg you to take it at my reception." He smiled, and so did I. We understood each other perfectly. Then he reconducted me to the top of his steps, both leaves of the doors being thrown open; we walked abreast, I being on his right hand. The only Duke I did not call on was M. de Luxembourg; I still hoped we might some day obtain a reversal of the strange decree in his favour, and I would not prejudice any attempt to do so by recognising his position. I had never been reconciled with him, and showed him no polite attentions on this occasion.

I consulted Dongois as to the details of what I had to do at the ceremony; he was chief registrar to the Parliament, and had great experience in all matters relating to it. Obliging and polite as he was, the worthy man set three snares for me: it was only what one might have expected from a man of his gown, but I perceived them at once, and avoided them all three. He told me that, out of respect for the Parliament, I ought to appear dressed in black, without any gold lace; that Princes of the Blood wore a mantle which came down below their coats, that out of respect for them, mine ought not to come below my *just-aucorps*; and finally, that, out of respect for the First-President, I ought, when paying the usual visit of thanks to him the day after my reception, to wear my parliamentary costume. He did not tell me quite so bluntly that I ought to show my respect in these three ways, but cleverly insinuated it. Without appearing to notice what he said, I took care to do exactly the contrary; and, my attention having been called to the matter in this way, I always took care to warn other Peers who were received after me, and they were careful to follow my example. It is by tricks like this that so many encroachments have been made on the privileges of Dukes; it is surprising what they amount to when they are considered as a whole.

I chose Dreux to be the reporter at my reception, because I knew him to be a worthy and upright magistrate, and they feel flattered at being chosen on these occasions. He was the father of the Grand Master of Ceremonies, and had only lately become a member of the Grand Chamber. According to custom, I sent him a service of silver plate on the morning of my reception, and the same to the First-President and the Procureur-Général. Lamoignon, when First-President, set the example of refusing these gifts, and it has always been followed since. Dreux, a new-comer into the Grand Chamber, who had been all his life immersed in his briefs, was ignorant of both customs; he was much offended at my sending him a present, and asked who I took him for. He returned it as an affront, and only found out afterwards that it was merely a formality.

The promotion of General officers which had been expected for some time took place at last. It was prodigious: seventeen new lieutenant-generals were appointed; fifty *maréchaux-de-camp*; forty-one brigadiers of infantry, and thirty-eight of cavalry. I must now explain how I was affected by it. The reduction of the army after the Peace of Ryswick had been on a large scale, and carried out in a very strange manner. Barbésieux, who was young and impetuous, cared nothing for the quality of the regiments, especially in the cavalry, nor for the merits of the colonels and other officers; and the King left everything to him. I had no acquaintance with him. My regiment was disbanded, and, as it was a very good one, he gave what was left of it to the regiment of Duras, and my own troop was incorporated in that of his brother-in-law, the Count d'Uzès, whom he favoured particularly. It was no consolation to me that the same fate befell many others. The colonels of the disbanded regiments were attached to other corps; I was attached to Saint-Moris' regiment. He was a gentleman from Franche-Comté, whom I had never seen in my life.

Before long a red-tape regulation came into force, by which one had to join the regiment to which one was attached for two months in the year. I thought it absurd, but I obeyed; only, as I had certain little ailments, and had been recommended the waters of Plombières, I asked leave to go there; and in this way, for three years running, I avoided being banished to a regiment in which I did not

know a soul, where I had no men under my command, and nothing whatever to do. The King showed no displeasure; I was often asked to Marly; he spoke to me sometimes, a marked sign of favour; in short, he treated me well, better than most men of my age and position.

In the meantime, some of my juniors were appointed to vacant colonelcies; but, as they were all old officers who had formerly been given regiments on the ground of long services, I thought nothing of it. I felt no anxiety about the coming promotion. The times when birth and rank gave a claim were over; except in the case of officers promoted on the field for good service everything went by seniority. There were too many colonels senior to me for me to think of being appointed brigadier; all my ambition was to serve in the coming war at the head of a regiment, and not as a sort of aide-de-camp to Saint-Moris, after being selected for a command after the battle of Neerwinden; especially as I had brought my regiment into good condition and commanded it, if I may say so, with zeal and reputation during four campaigns.

When the promotion was announced I looked eagerly through the list of brigadiers of cavalry to see how near my turn was; what was my surprise to see among them five who were junior to me. I shall never forget their names; they were the Count d'Ayen, d'Ourches, Vaudeuil, Streff, and Ruffé. I was extremely angry. Promotion by seniority was humiliation enough; to be passed over by the Count d'Ayen, because he had married Madame de Maintenon's niece, and by four private gentlemen, was intolerable. Nevertheless, I said nothing, for fear of doing something foolish in a fit of anger. Marshal de Lorge was also very angry, both on my account and his own; it was a slight to him which was obvious to everybody. He was fond of me, and both he and his brother, Marshal de Duras, advised me to resign my commission. My anger inclined me to do so; but then I reflected that I was young, that a war was just beginning; that I should find idleness irksome, and that it would be painful to give up my profession, and hear every summer of officers who had made a name for themselves and received promotion. Two months passed away while I was in this perplexity; every morning I made up my mind to leave the service, and yet the day went by without my being able to do it.

At last I resolved to leave the decision to others ; and I chose my arbitrators among persons holding different positions in life. They were Marshal de Choiseul, under whom I had served, a good judge in such matters ; M. de Beauvilliers ; the Chancellor ; and M. de la Rochefoucauld. I had already complained to them, and they agreed that I had been treated unjustly ; but the last three had expressed themselves like courtiers. That was just what I wanted ; the courtier-spirit would make them cautious in their decision. All I wished for was good advice, given by men of position, with access to the King, and such as would carry weight in society ; such also as would be sufficient to keep me from regretting, when too late, that I had taken it.

But if I thought the three courtiers would be of an opinion different to that of the three Marshals, I was mistaken ; they were unanimous in telling me that it would be shameful and intolerable for a man of my birth and dignity, after serving with honour and reputation in command of a fine, good regiment, to remain in the army at the outbreak of a fresh war as a member of Saint-Moris' staff, especially after seeing five officers, junior to me, promoted over my head. They pointed out that, after such a numerous promotion, I should have to wait a long time for a regiment, to say nothing of a brigade ; and, further, that if I had to submit to such an injustice during the life-time of my father-in-law and his brother, who were both of them Marshals of France, Dukes, and Captains of the Body-guard, I could not expect anything better when I should no longer have their influence to support me. They said that a resignation sent in with such just grounds for complaint, and after having distinguished myself on active service, was a very different thing to resigning out of indolence or cowardice. In short, though I consulted them separately, they all gave the same advice, and supported it by the same arguments, just as if they had taken counsel together.

As I had chosen them as judges, I was not going to appeal against their decision. I made up my mind to resign, but even then I felt that I still hesitated ; it was nearly three months before I took the final step. In doing so, I continued to follow the advice of the same persons ; I let fall no expressions of discontent ; I contented myself with the approbation of society, and especially of the mili-

tary world, and made up my mind to face the inevitable anger of the King. My counsellors had told me that he would be angry. He was offended when any one resigned his commission, especially a person of distinction; he called it "leaving him"; but he was particularly angry when an officer resigned because of an injustice, and never failed to show his displeasure for a long time.

I wished to carry out my decision as respectfully as possible; I therefore wrote a short letter to the King, in which, without a hint of any grievance, I expressed my regret that the state of my health compelled me to leave his service, adding that my only consolation was the prospect of seeing him with fewer interruptions, and being able to pay my court to him in person with more assiduity. My friends approved of my letter, and on Tuesday in Holy Week I gave it into his own hand as he was going into his private room on his return from Mass. Then I went on to see Chamillart, with whom I had no acquaintance whatever; I told him the same thing by word of mouth, without any expression of dissatisfaction; and then went to Paris.

I left several friends of both sexes on the watch, to let me know what the King, or any one else, said, concerning my letter. After a week's absence I returned to Versailles. I heard from the Chancellor that, when he entered the room where the Council was to be held, he found the King reading my letter; and that he said to him with some emotion: "Well, sir, here is another man leaving us!" and immediately repeated my letter word for word. I did not hear that he said anything on the subject to any one else. On Tuesday after Easter, as he was coming away from supper, I appeared in his presence for the first time since my letter. I should be ashamed to relate the trifling incident which follows, if it were not characteristic of him.

Although the room where he undressed was very well lighted, the Almoner of the day always held a lighted candle in his hand during the prayers, and afterwards gave it to the first *valet-de-chambre*, who bore it before the King as he went to his arm-chair. The King then cast his eyes round the bystanders and named one of them, to whom the *valet-de-chambre* handed the candlestick. It was a favour and distinction which counted for something; for the King was skilled in the art of attaching dignity to trifles.

He gave it to persons of the highest birth and rank, very rarely indeed to others, and then only when of advanced age or high official position. He often gave it to me; never to Ambassadors, except perhaps to the Papal Nuncio, and in these latter days to the Spanish Ambassador. On being named, one took off one's glove, advanced, and held the candlestick during the *coucher*, which did not last long; after which the first *valet-de-chambre* handed it to one of those who had only the privilege of the *petit coucher*, at his discretion. On this occasion I kept in the background on purpose, and was much surprised, as were the bystanders, to hear my name called; and ever afterwards he gave me the candlestick almost as often as before. It was not that there were not many persons of distinction present at this *coucher* to whom he might have given it; but he was sufficiently annoyed to wish to conceal his annoyance.

That was all, however, that I did get from him for three years, during which, for want of more serious opportunities, he never missed the most trifling occasion of showing his displeasure. He never spoke to me; if his eyes fell on me it was by accident; he never said a word to Marshal de Lorge about my letter or about my leaving the service. I was never on the list for Marly, and after the first few visits there I ceased to give him the satisfaction of refusing me.

I must relate these petty matters to the end. About fourteen months afterwards the King went to stay at Trianon. The Princesses had got into the habit, while there, of each inviting two ladies to supper, and the King, in order to gratify them, did not interfere; but at last he grew tired of it; the faces he saw at his table did not please him, because he was not accustomed to them. After this, he made out each morning a very short list of ladies who were to be asked to supper, and sent it to the Duchess du Lude. This visit to Trianon was to be from Wednesday to Saturday, so there would be three suppers. Madame de Saint-Simon and I intended to spend our time as we usually did while the Court was at Marly; and on the Wednesday, the day the King left Versailles, we went to dine with Chamillart at L'Étang, meaning to go on to Paris afterwards. Just as we were sitting down to dinner, Madame de Saint-Simon received a message from Madame

du Lude warning her that she was on the King's list for supper that very day. We were very much astonished, but returned at once to Versailles. Madame de Saint-Simon was the only lady of her time of life at the supper; the others were the Duchesses de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers, Madame de Grammont, and three or four other old ladies; with the Ladies of the Palace on duty.

On the Friday she was again asked with the same ladies; and always afterwards, when the King made one of his rare visits to Trianon, she was asked in the same way. I soon saw what he meant by it, and laughed. He did not ask Madame de Saint-Simon to Marly, because the husband of any lady invited there accompanied her as a matter of course, and slept there; moreover, no one saw the King at Marly except those who were invited. At Trianon, on the contrary, all the courtiers were at liberty to go and pay their respects at any hour of the day; but no one slept there, not even ladies, only the most indispensable members of the household. By asking Madame de Saint-Simon to supper there the King wished to show in the most pointed manner that his displeasure fell on me alone, and that she had no share in it.

We continued to pay our court assiduously, without asking for invitations to Marly; we lived pleasantly with our friends, and Madame de Saint-Simon continued to enjoy the favours which the King and the Duchess of Burgundy had shown her for some time past, but which were such as could not be shared with me. I have thought it best to go through with this matter at once, without interruption; it is not without interest as throwing some light on the King's character. I will merely add that he paid Marshal de Lorge the compliment of giving his son, who had only recently become a Captain in the cavalry, the preference for the command of the finest regiment of grey cavalry; it had become open for purchase by the promotion of its Colonel.

CHAPTER II

1702

Startling news from Italy—Surprise of Cremona—Marshal de Villeroy taken prisoner—Gallant conduct of Praslin and Mahony—The enemy forced to retire—Cowardice of Montgon—Promotions and rewards—Vendôme appointed to succeed Villeroy—The Grand-Prior refused an appointment—Feuquières also rejected—His character—A *bourgeois* snubbed—The Maréchale de Clerembault—Madame de Benoron—It is proposed to publish a book with engravings and explanations of all medals commemorating events of the reign of Louis XIV—I am asked to write a sketch of Louis XIII's life by way of introduction—The glory of the father is found to overshadow that of the son, and my work is declined—Cattinat and Chamillart—Madame de Maintenon's tender solicitude for the King.

ON the 6th of February the Duke de Villeroy arrived, despatched by his father to make a report to the King on various matters connected with the war in Italy. It was a fortunate journey for him, as he found out three days later. On the 9th, Mahony, an Irish officer of much intelligence and courage, arrived with most astonishing news.

Prince Eugène had conceived the design of surprising Cremona, where the headquarters of our army were established; it had a Spanish Governor and a very strong garrison. Towards the end of January, Revel, the senior Lieutenant-General of our army, arrived there, and took over the command from Crenan. He received orders from Marshal de Villeroy, who was making a tour of inspection, to send a strong detachment to Parma; the Duke of that place had asked for it, for his own protection; but it was suspected afterwards that he had been acting in concert with Prince Eugène, in order to weaken the garrison of Cremona. Hearing rumours of movements on the part of the enemy, Revel wisely contented himself with holding the detachment in readiness, but did not send it off. Marshal de Villeroy, having finished his tour and held a conference with the Prince of Vaudemont at Milan, arrived

at Cremona on the 31st of January. He entertained many guests at supper, during which he was observed to be very thoughtful; he afterwards played at ombre, but seemed absent-minded, and retired to bed very early.

Prince Eugène had found that an old aqueduct existed, which extended far into the country; the end of it came out in a house inside the walls of Cremona, occupied by a priest. He gained over the priest and sent a number of picked men through the aqueduct. He ordered Prince Thomas de Vaudemont, the senior Lieutenant-General of his army, to take a strong detachment to seize a redoubt which defended the head of the bridge over the Po, and, as soon as fighting had begun in the town, to cross the bridge to his assistance. He himself was to march with a strong force to a walled-up gate close to the priest's house, which was to be broken open by the men who had entered through the aqueduct.

All was well designed, and carried out with the greatest secrecy and precision. The first to give the alarm was Crenan's cook, who had gone out at daybreak to buy provisions, and found the streets full of soldiers in strange uniforms. Crenan would not believe it at first, but dressed as speedily as possible, and was soon convinced of the fact. At the same time, by a piece of good luck which saved Cremona, the marine regiment was parading in one of the squares to be inspected by its Colonel, d'Entragues, as soon as it was light. It was still dusk when d'Entragues arrived, but his battalions were already under arms; he perceived through the darkness some bodies of infantry forming in the streets facing him. As he knew by the general orders of the previous evening that no troops were to be under arms, except his own, he suspected some surprise; he instantly marched against these troops, found that they were enemies, charged them, held his own against the reinforcements which they brought up, and such an obstinate combat took place that the town was aroused and time given for the rest of the garrison to assemble under arms.

Marshal de Villeroy was already dressed at daybreak, and was writing in his room when he heard the noise of the battle; he instantly sent for his horse, and rode off to the principal square, which had been indicated as the alarm-post, accompanied only by an aide-de-camp and a

page. At the corner of a street he fell in with a body of the enemy ; resistance was impossible, and an offer of 10,000 pistoles to the officer in command was indignantly refused ; the Marshal was made prisoner and sent to Prince Eugène, who did not receive him very politely. While there he saw Crenan brought in, also a prisoner, and mortally wounded ; he cried out that he would willingly change places with him. Shortly afterwards they were both sent out of the town in Prince Eugène's carriage, guarded by an escort.

In the meantime Revel had assumed the command ; fighting was going on in nearly every street ; but our troops were gradually driven back to the ramparts. If the Imperialists had made a determined effort to seize the walls, the town must have been lost ; but, fortunately, they frittered away their strength in the interior of the town. Praslin, in the absence of Montgon, *maréchal-de-camp*, who was not to be found, put himself at the head of some Irish battalions, and they did wonders, holding their own, and clearing the neighbouring streets. In the midst of all the fighting, Praslin had the presence of mind to remember that the only chance of saving Cremona depended on breaking the bridge over the Po, to prevent reinforcements coming to the enemy. He sent Mahony to Revel to tell him so ; and Revel instantly sent to withdraw the garrison of the redoubt at the further end. He was only just in time. Prince Thomas de Vaudemont was just arriving, and the bridge was broken under a heavy fire of musketry.

It was now three in the afternoon, and Prince Eugène was at the Hôtel-de-ville engaged in swearing in the magistrates. Feeling uneasy at the non-arrival of Prince Thomas he ascended the cathedral tower ; he saw that the bridge was broken down, and what he saw in the town itself was not encouraging ; our troops still held the ramparts. He was furious at the failure of his enterprise when success seemed to be certain, but at once made up his mind to retreat. In the meantime, Revel, seeing his troops worn out by fatigue and hunger, was thinking, on his side, of withdrawing, with such forces as he could get together, into the citadel, in hopes of obtaining an honourable capitulation ; so that the Generals on both sides were meditating a retreat at the same time. A hot combat had taken place at one of the gates, which had been seized by the enemy ;

our troops made a last effort to drive them off, and the Irish battalions which were in possession of the adjoining rampart rendered valuable assistance; the attack was partially successful, for, though the enemy retained possession of the lower part of the gate, our troops secured the upper part, and thus re-established the communication along the ramparts. This combat was succeeded by a lull, during which Mahony proposed to Revel that he should go out into the town and see what was going on. It was now growing dark, but Mahony found everything quiet, and discovered that the enemy had retreated. Revel could hardly believe it, nor could many other officers, but they were convinced at last. Next morning the streets were found choked with dead and wounded; Revel restored order, and Mahony, who had distinguished himself extremely, was sent to the King with despatches.

Prince Eugène marched all night with his detachment, carrying with him Marshal de Villeroy, who was eventually sent to Gratz, in Styria. Crenan died of his wounds; and d'Entragues, to whose fortunate review and to whose courage Cremona owed its safety, did not survive that glorious day. The Spanish Governor was killed, and so were half his troops. The loss of the Imperialists was still greater; and they had failed in an enterprise which would have decided the war in Italy at one stroke.

Montgon, *maréchal-de-camp*, had an adventure which did not re-establish his doubtful reputation for courage. At the first alarm he went out on foot, but immediately came back, saying that he had been knocked over and trampled upon by a party of hostile cavalry. He declared that he was badly hurt, went to bed, and sent to the nearest party of the enemy to give himself up as a prisoner. He passed the whole of this terrible day between the sheets; he heard there that Cremona was lost; then that it was retaken. After the fighting was over, Prince Eugène claimed him as a prisoner, and he was willing enough to go; but our Generals asserted that he had regained his liberty when the town was recaptured. The King wished to have the opinions of the Marshals of France on the question, though he said at the same time that it was not worth making a fuss about. Prince Eugène yielded the point, but Montgon went to him all the same to give himself up; Prince Eugène, however, wanted no uncertain prisoners,

and sent him back. This adventure occasioned a good deal of talk, and the remarks made were not complimentary to Montgon; he would have fallen irretrievably into disgrace with the King, but for Madame de Maintenon, who had always been the avowed patroness of his wife and of old Madame d'Heudicourt, his mother-in-law.

I heard the news from M. de Lausun, and immediately went to the *château*, where I found great excitement and people assembled in groups eagerly talking over the affair. Marshal de Villeroy was treated as unlucky people generally are, especially when they have been the objects of jealousy. The King took his part openly; he told Madame d'Armagnac how grieved he was for her brother's misfortune, made excuses for him, and showed a good deal of displeasure against those who blamed him. In fact, Villeroy was not to blame; he had only arrived at Cremona the evening before; he could not be expected to know anything about the aqueduct, nor that the enemy had introduced soldiers into the place by its means. If any one was responsible it was Crenan and the Spanish Governor. The Marshal did what he could; the best thing he could do was to hasten to the principal square; and it was no fault of his that he was made prisoner on his way thither.

His son, who was with his wife at Marly, came with her to Versailles on hearing the news; the Maréchale de Villeroy was there. I was a great friend of theirs; I went to see them next morning, and found them in great grief. The Maréchale, who was very clever and sensible, had not been dazzled by her husband's brilliant position when chosen for the command in Italy. She knew him thoroughly, and had her misgivings. She broke down on receiving the news of this event, and for a long time would see no one except her most intimate friends. The Duchess de Villeroy did not return to Marly, on account of the balls which were going on there. Mademoiselle d'Armagnac was unwilling to miss any of them, though her father and uncles took the side of Marshal de Villeroy with great warmth.

After dinner, on the day of Mahony's arrival, the King had a long conversation with him in his private room. While it was going on a crowd of courtiers were assembled in the outer room, and it occasioned general surprise to see Chamillart waiting among the rest. He was, of course, tormented by many questions. He spoke highly of the

principal officers, and of the good conduct of our troops on the whole ; he was particularly warm in his praises of Praslin's behaviour, and especially of his presence of mind in causing the bridge to be broken down. I have already said that Praslin was a great friend of mine. Although I hardly knew Chamillart at that time, I could not refrain from telling him that such an important service deserved to be richly rewarded. At the end of an hour the King came out of his room ; as he was changing his clothes for a walk in the gardens he talked a good deal about the affair of Cremona, and praised the conduct of the principal officers. He spoke at some length about Mahony ; he said he had never heard a report so clear and so well-expressed as his, and he added, with some satisfaction, that he gave him a pension of 1,000 francs, and the rank of Brevet-Colonel. Mahony was a major in Dillon's regiment. That evening, as we entered the ball-room, the Prince of Conti told us that the King had given the Order to Revel ; and, to my extreme delight, that Praslin was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General. Many other promotions were made, and pensions distributed.

The most urgent question now was the appointment of a new Commander-in-Chief for Italy. The next day, after hearing Mass, the King had a long conversation with Chamillart in Madame de Maintenon's room, at which she was present. All the courtiers who were at Marly were assembled in the saloons, waiting to hear Villeroy's successor announced ; my curiosity carried me there with the others. Chamillart came out, and, seeing the Prince of Conti, went up to him and said something. Every one thought he was chosen, and there was general applause, but it was soon apparent that there was a mistake. Chamillart only spoke to him for a moment, then advanced, as if looking for some one ; perceiving Harcourt, he went straight up to him. There was no doubt this time, and all eyes were fixed upon them. The appointment would have exactly fitted in with the King of Spain's wish to go to Italy, with Harcourt under him. But Harcourt at that time was striving to enter the Council, as I have said, and his hopes were at their highest pitch, for he had not yet destroyed them by his contemptuous speeches to the King on the subject of his Ministers. He was, therefore, by no means anxious to accept a command which would have put an end to his

projects with regard to the Council ; he refused, on the pretext of ill-health. He and Chamillart drew aside and conversed with animation for some time, all eyes being fixed upon them ; at last they separated, and Chamillart returned alone to Madame de Maintenon's room. After a short absence he returned, and the general curiosity was more excited than ever. He looked round and went up to M. de Vendôme ; after a very short conversation they both went into Madame de Maintenon's room. As soon as the King returned to his own apartments the appointment of Vendôme was announced ; and he went off to Paris that evening to prepare for his journey to Italy. He started two days later ; the King gave him 4,000 louis for his outfit.

The disappointment of the Duke of Orleans and the Princes of the Blood was extreme, and they showed it openly. They attacked Marshal de Villeroy without mercy ; the King, on the other hand, took every opportunity of defending him, and even went so far as to say that people only attacked the Marshal because they knew he was friendly to him ; the word " favourite," which had never fallen from his lips before, escaped him on this occasion. He wrote the kindest letter imaginable to him and sent it to him open, so that it might not appear suspicious to the enemies, and also, that they might see in what high esteem he held the Marshal. Although he had no familiar acquaintance with the Maréchale, he sent her all sorts of kind messages by her son, by the Grand Equerry, and others ; and, as soon as he left Marly, saw her in private for a considerable time, and overwhelmed her with attentions.

Envy is a cruel passion ; that was Praslin's experience. After heaping praises on him, people began to grumble at his rapid promotion, for he became a Lieutenant-General before he had even heard of his promotion to be *maréchal-de-camp*. There were no reasons to be alleged against his advancement ; but the women did not require any, they simply made an outcry against him. The Countess de Roucy was furious, among others ; but she was more candid than most of them, for one day, when I had insisted on her giving some reason for her anger, she replied that I could not deny that Praslin was a Lieutenant-General, while her husband was not ; and her husband had never left the Court !

The Duke of Orleans and the Princes of the Blood were just as jealous of Vendôme. They had felt for a long time that the King would not employ their services, and that his preference was always given to persons of illegitimate descent; but this last instance of his partiality made them furious. Vendôme perceived it, even in the short time he spent at Marly and in Paris before his departure, and he tried to soften their displeasure by saying everywhere that he only owed his appointment to Harcourt's refusal. At the same time he made a merit of showing his attachment to the King's person, and his zeal for the State by refusing nothing, not even a command which had been rejected by another.

His brother, the Grand Prior, had the mortification of being flatly refused when he asked to be allowed to serve under him in Italy. His daily debauchery, his disgraceful life, and several audacious attempts to presume on the favour shown to his illegitimate birth, were at last punished by this snub. He had some difficulty in regaining his position after it.

Feuquières, a Lieutenant-General, was also refused. He was a man of quality, of great ability and a cultivated mind, very brave, and of incontestable military talent; but he was the most spiteful of men; he took a delight in mischief for its own sake, and would do his best to ruin the reputation of another, even when he had nothing to gain by it. He was extremely dangerous to the Generals under whom he served, for they could not trust him either to give good advice or to carry out their orders. He did not scruple to cause the failure of an undertaking out of mere spite; he served Bullonde in this way at the battle of Coni; and he did his best to lose the battle of Neerwinden, where, as I have already mentioned, he refused to charge or to stir from his position. The Duke d'Elbœuf told him publicly that he had tried to lose the battle in order to ruin M. de Luxembourg, although the latter had particularly asked for his services in order to take him out of obscurity. Marshal de Lorge had also given him a fresh start, and received the same return as M. de Luxembourg. It was no fault of his that the Marshal's army was not completely defeated on one occasion; the thing was so notorious that if M. de Lorge had wished it, Feuquières would have run great risks of losing his head. He has left Memoirs which,

though he makes the most artful and spiteful insinuations against every General with whom he served, are perhaps the best work ever written for the instruction of a soldier, and the training of a great commander. Feuquières had married the heiress of Hocquincourt; but he ended his days in obscurity, poor, abandoned, and generally detested. His only son died without children, and his daughter made a wretched marriage.†

Colandre, a Lieutenant in the Guards, who had distinguished himself greatly on active service, and whose face made him an object of interest to the ladies, was allowed to purchase the command of a regiment. He was in treaty for the Queen's Infantry Regiment; but the King stopped the bargain; he thought that Colandre, who was the son of a rich merchant of Rouen, was not of sufficient quality to command a regiment of that sort. Different maxims prevail now; that is why I mention this refusal; I could quote many others like it, and even more marked, with regard to other corps.

La Feuillade hastened to profit by the matrimonial alliance which he had just contracted. Chamillart got him made a *maréchal-de-camp*, without ever having served as a brigadier, and he went off to join the army in Italy.

About this time, Madame, with the King's consent, made a change in her household; she dismissed her Maids of Honour, giving them pensions, and took the Maréchale de Clerembault and Madame de Beuvron to live with her, without any particular office or title. She had always been very fond of them, but Monsieur detested them, and had not allowed her to see much of them.

The Maréchale de Clerembault was the daughter of Chavigny, Secretary of State, concerning whom I had something to say when telling the story of my father's life. She had been governess to the Queen of Spain, Monsieur's daughter; but he found fault with her for some reason, and sent her away rather rudely. She was a great friend and near relation of the Chancellor and his wife, and often went to Pontchartrain with them; I made her acquaintance there. She was a very singular old lady; when she felt disposed to talk, and could do so without restraint, she was extremely amusing, and used to say most witty and original things, which seemed to come quite naturally, without any straining for effect. But except on these

occasions she would spend whole days without saying a word ; in her youth she had almost died of some chest complaint, and had the courage to go a whole year without speaking. As she was naturally quiet and placid the habit had grown upon her. She was extremely clever, and her cleverness showed itself in odd ways. Although she came to Court late in life she was passionately fond of it, and had a most singular insight into everything that was going on. When she condescended to take the trouble she used to tell delightful stories of what she had seen ; but there were very few persons before whom she let herself go in this way, and it was only in the strictest privacy.

She was very miserly, and passionately fond of play ; indeed, with the exception of conversation within these very restricted limits, she cared for nothing else. I remember that at Pontchartrain, on the most lovely days, after returning from Mass, she would stand on the bridge which leads to the gardens, look round her, and say : " There, I have had a good walk to-day ; let me hear no more about going out ; let us go at once and play cards " ; and she would spend the rest of the day at cards, only breaking off for the two meals ; and then be displeased if people left off two hours after midnight. She ate very little, often without drinking at all, never more than a glass of water at any time. If she could have had her own way she would have eaten her meals at the card-table. She knew a great deal of history and science, but never paraded her knowledge. She always wore a mask when in a carriage or sedan chair, or when walking in the galleries ; it was an old fashion which she had never left off ; she said her skin became rough when exposed to the air ; and she certainly kept a fine complexion till she died, over eighty years of age ; but otherwise she had never had any pretension to beauty. She was always treated with great respect and consideration. She claimed to be able to foretell the future by means of little dots, and that had gained her the friendship of Madame, who was fond of marvels of that sort ; but she was very reserved about it.

I must relate one characteristic anecdote of this strange person. She had a sister who was a nun at the convent of St. Antoine at Paris, and was said to have even more knowledge and wit than she had herself ; this sister was the only person she loved. She often used to go to see her

from Versailles, and, though very miserly as a rule, showered presents on her. This nun fell sick ; the Maréchale visited her constantly, and was always sending messages. When at last she saw that her sister was very ill indeed, and could not recover, she said : “ Oh, well ! my poor sister, let me hear no more about her ! ” and after she died she never mentioned her again, nor did any one ever speak to her about her. As for her two sons, she cared nothing about them, and she was not far wrong, though they always behaved well before her ; she lost them both, but from the very first she showed no sign of grief.

The Countess de Beuvron, like the Maréchale de Clerembault, was a person whom it was unwise to offend, and she also was a great friend of mine. She came of a good family in Gascony ; her father was the Marquis de Théobon, whose family name was Rochefort. Her husband was Captain of Monsieur’s Guards ; I have mentioned him when speaking of the death of the first wife of that Prince. She became a widow in 1688, without children. The intrigues of the Palais-Royal caused her to be sent away by Monsieur, to the great displeasure of Madame, who was not allowed to see her for several years, except at a few stolen interviews in convents at Paris. But she used to write to her every day, and receive an answer by a page specially sent for it. Madame de Beuvron was very intimate with her husband’s family ; she was constantly at the house of the Duchess d’Arpajon, and, as we were great friends with Madame de Roucy, the Duchess’s daughter, we became acquainted with her in this way ; she had, however, only lately returned to the Court since Monsieur’s death. She was a woman of much ability and knowledge of the world ; in spite of a rather bad temper and an inordinate love of play, she was amiable, and a very kind and trustworthy friend.

It seemed as if the King’s flatterers about this time had a premonition that the prosperity of his reign was drawing to a close, and that his constancy under misfortune would, for the future, be the only subject they would find for praise. The numerous medals which had been struck to commemorate the events of his reign, even the most trifling ones, were now collected and engraved, and destined to adorn a history of the medallistic art. Three *savants* of the French Academy were entrusted with the description

and explanation of these medals, which were to be published in a book magnificently printed at the Louvre. A preface was required ; as the series of medals began at the death of Louis XIII, his medal was naturally printed at the beginning of the book, and it seemed as if some mention of that Sovereign ought to be made in the preface. Some acquaintance of these savants was aware of my just feelings of gratitude to Louis XIII, and suggested that I should write such part of the preface as related to him, or the description to be placed under his medal. Without considering my want of literary skill I accepted the task, only stipulating that the secret should be faithfully kept and that I should not be exposed to the ridicule of society.

I wrote the description accordingly. I kept a strict watch over myself, for I did not wish the glory of the son to be obscured by that of his father in a work written expressly for the former ; especially as the father's name only came into it incidentally. Having written my exercise, which was necessarily short, I handed it in ; it was highly commended, and did not appear extravagant in any way. I was pleased with myself, and delighted to have given up two or three hours to the expression of my gratitude, for it did not take me longer.

But when these gentlemen came to examine it more closely they were frightened. There are simple truths which, however plainly expressed, are sufficient to destroy the effects of a partial and exaggerated flattery ; the life and character of Louis XIII furnished abundant instances of them. I had only touched lightly on them, but my pencil sketch dimmed the effect of the pictures which followed it, in the opinion of those who painted them. They had to tone down my work, to omit parts of it, to weaken it, so as not to throw their hero into the shade by a comparison which was too easily made. But they found the task difficult ; they discovered that it was not my work which was at fault, but the facts themselves ; they might omit some of my true statements, but unless they omitted them all there would still be enough to cast a shade over the subject of their adulation. They decided finally to publish their work with a simple drawing of the medal of Louis XIII at the beginning, and a few words merely indicating that his death had placed his son on the throne. Reflections on injustice of this kind would lead me too far. The compilers were more just to

me ; they kept their word, and it was never known that I had written anything.

Chamillart was overwhelmed with business ; he had to supply money to defray the enormous expense of the armies. Vendôme, who was constantly advised by the Duke du Maine and Madame de Maintenon, was sending courier after courier with accounts of his plans, assurances of his vigilance, and exaggerated descriptions of such trifling skirmishes as were of daily occurrence at the outposts. Count d'Estrées came to Paris for a week ; he received orders to take his squadron to Barcelona and escort the King of Spain to Naples ; he was then to return to Toulon, where the Count de Toulouse was to embark and exercise his office of Admiral for the first time. Marshal de Boufflers was to command in Flanders, under the Duke of Burgundy.

For the army of the Rhine it was necessary to have recourse to Cattinat. Since his return from Italy he had been living in his little house at St. Gratien, seeing only his family and a few friends, and bearing with fortitude the unjust contempt with which he was treated. Chamillart sent him word that he had the King's orders to speak to him ; he came to Paris, and there heard of the command destined for him ; he protested warmly against it, and only yielded to extreme pressure, and because he could not disobey. Next morning, the 11th of March, he attended the King's *lever*, and was taken by him into his private room. The conversation was friendly on the King's part, serious and respectful on the part of Cattinat. The King, perceiving his coldness, tried to draw him out, spoke to him of Italy, and begged him to speak openly of all that had occurred there. Cattinat asked to be excused ; he said it was useless to refer to past events, it would only give the King a bad opinion of persons of whose services, as it appeared, he wished to avail himself ; and it would stir up undying animosities. The King admired his wisdom and good feeling, but he wished to get to the bottom of certain things, so that he might see whether Cattinat or his Minister had been in fault ; in order also to put them on friendly terms with each other now that they would be brought into such frequent communication. He therefore mentioned some important occurrences which Cattinat had not reported and which had reached him through other channels.

Cattinat, from something Chamillart had let fall during

their conversation on the previous evening, had suspected that the King would say something of the sort, and had brought his papers to Versailles. He assured the King that he had never concealed anything, and had made full reports of these particular occurrences either to himself or to Chamillart; he asked him to allow a messenger to go for his papers, and he would then produce proofs which Chamillart could not deny if he were present. The King took him at his word, and sent for Chamillart.

When he came, the King told him what had passed between himself and Cattinat. Chamillart, in an embarrassed voice, said there was no occasion to wait for Cattinat's papers, for he admitted the entire truth of what he had said. The King, in great astonishment, reproached him for his silence and want of fidelity, which, owing to the full confidence he placed in him, had been the sole cause of his displeasure with Cattinat. Chamillart listened in silence, with downcast eyes, but as he felt that the King's anger was rising, "Sire," he said, "you are quite right, but it was not my fault." "And whose fault was it, then?" said the King, "mine, perhaps?" "Certainly not, Sire," said Chamillart trembling; "but I venture to assure you, with the most exact truth, that it was not mine." As the King insisted on an explanation Chamillart had to come out with it; he confessed that, having shown Cattinat's despatches to Madame de Maintenon, because he thought their contents would grieve and perplex His Majesty, she had forbidden him to take them any further; and when he represented that it was his duty to conceal nothing from the King, and that he would be ruined if his breach of trust were discovered, she had taken all the responsibility on herself, and laid such strict injunctions on him not to show the letters that he had not ventured to do so. He added that Madame de Maintenon was not far off, and begged the King to ask her to tell him the truth of the affair.

The King was now, in his turn, more embarrassed than Chamillart; lowering his voice, he said it was inconceivable how anxious Madame de Maintenon was to save him from being annoyed by disagreeable business; then, without finding fault any longer, he turned to the Marshal and said he was delighted that the affair had been cleared up in a way which showed that nobody was to blame. He added many kind expressions of regard for the Marshal, begged him to

live on good terms with Chamillart, left them hastily, and retired to his private room.

Cattinat was pleased at having cleared himself so completely, but he was even more ashamed of what he had just heard and seen ; he spoke politely to Chamillart, and he, still upset at the remembrance of his dangerous explanation, responded cordially, as well as he could. They left the room together, and the appointment of Cattinat to the command of the army on the Rhine was announced forthwith. That evening the King heard from Madame de Maintenon that Chamillart's story was true ; and they were more friendly with each other than ever. Madame de Maintenon approved of Chamillart's conduct in making a full confession when driven to extremities ; and he was even better treated than before by her and by the King.

CHAPTER III

1702

Illness and death of William III—Queen Anne proclaimed—Marlborough sent to Holland—Death of the famous Jean Bart—The Marquis de Thianges—The King of Spain embarks for Italy—Cardinal Borgia—Meat on Good Friday—Serious conspiracies detected at Rome and Naples—The Count de Toulouse joins the fleet as Admiral—The Duke of Burgundy passes through Cambrai—Meeting between him and the Archbishop—The Jesuits—Visit of Madame de Saint-Simon to St. Cloud—I renew my friendship with the Duke of Orleans—M. and Madame du Maine make advances to me—I receive them coldly—Quarrel between Madame du Maine and my sister-in-law

KING WILLIAM, prematurely worn out by fatigue and the cares of public business, had fallen into a very bad state of health ; his breathing was difficult, and the asthma from which he had suffered for some years became much worse. He consulted the most celebrated physicians of Europe under assumed names, among others Fagon, to whom he wrote in the character of a parish priest ; Fagon was taken in, and replied bluntly that he could give no other advice than to prepare for death. As the disease grew worse William consulted him again, but this time in his own name ; Fagon recognised the symptoms described by the priest, and this time, though his opinion was still the same, his reply was more considerate ; he prescribed some remedies which, though they could not cure, might prolong life a little. They gave William some relief, but the time was come for him to feel that the greatest and the least of men must alike perish, and to realise the vanity of what the world calls the greatest careers. He still rode occasionally ; it relieved him a little, but he was too weak to keep his seat : a stumble of his horse threw him out of the saddle, and the shock hastened his end. His last hours were as little occupied by religious thoughts as the whole of his life had been. He gave orders, and spoke to his Ministers and familiar friends with surprising tranquillity : he saw his end approaching without regret.

satisfied with having completed the Grand Alliance, and hoping that after his death it would be in a position to strike the blows which he had designed against France. These thoughts served to console him on his death-bed : a frivolous and cruelly deceitful consolation, which left him before long face to face with eternal truths. He died on Sunday, the 19th of March.

The Princess Anne, his sister-in-law, was proclaimed Queen ; she appointed her husband, Prince George of Denmark, High Admiral ; recalled her uncle, the Earl of Rochester, to her Council, as well as Sunderland, so famous for his ability and his treasons ; and sent the Earl of Marlborough, who afterwards acquired such renown, to Holland, with orders to carry out the plans of her predecessor.

The King did not hear of King William's death till the following Saturday, for all the English ports had been closed at once. He spoke very little on the subject, and affected indifference. Steps were taken to prevent a renewal of the indecent rejoicings which had taken place at Paris on a former occasion when King William was believed to have been killed at the battle of the Boyne. The King merely announced that he would not go into mourning, and he forbade the Duke de Bouillon and Marshals de Duras and de Lorge, who were related to King William, to do so.

The majority of the English people, and nearly all the Dutch, were grieved for the loss of King William ; only a few good republicans in Holland breathed more freely in secret, in hopes of regaining their liberties. His death was a great blow to the Grand Alliance, but it had been so well cemented that his spirit continued to animate it ; and Heinsius, whom he had raised to the post of Grand Pensionary of Holland, inspired the chiefs of the republic and the Generals with that spirit to such a degree that the death of King William made no perceptible difference.

The King suffered a serious loss by the death of the famous Jean Bart, who gained so much glory at sea. It is unnecessary to give any account of him. Another loss was the worthy La Freslière, a Lieutenant-General ; I have mentioned him before ; at eighty years of age he was still serving with the vigilance of a young man. He was a brave and honourable man, modest and good. Young and old looked to him with respect in the army, and he was so amiable

that the best company of all ages flocked to his house ; it is a rare compliment to a man of four-score years.

A man of better family, and singularly situated, died about the same time at his house in Burgundy ; I mean the Marquis de Thianges, whose family name was Damas ; his father was a Knight of the Order. He had married, in 1655, the eldest daughter of the first Duke de Mortemart, sister to the Marshal Duke de Vivonne, to Madame de Montespan, and to the Abbess of Fontevrault. After a son and two daughters had been born of this marriage, his wife left him to attach herself to the shameful favour of her sister ; and became as powerful and as much trusted as she was, without their affection for each other being diminished in the slightest degree. Like Madame de Montespan, she never had any further communication with her husband, and abandoned his arms and livery, using only her own. M. de Thianges never left his home, where he shut himself up and buried himself in sloth and obscurity ; he had not the same reason as his brother-in-law for doing so, but he felt the contempt of his haughty and powerful wife. He became a widower in 1693, when Madame de Montespan was no longer at Court ; but he did not think it worth while to return to Paris after so many years. His daughters had forgotten that they had a father ; but his son used often to visit him.

Louville had arrived at Barcelona ; the King of Spain was delighted to have nothing more to do but make preparations for his expedition to Italy. When he embarked, the Queen, accompanied by Madame des Ursins, went to the convent of Notre Dame de Montserrat, on her way to preside over the assembly of Aragon. Cardinal Borgia, Patriarch of the Indies, accompanied the King ; he was a very ignorant man, a servile courtier, and in every way eccentric. Louville was in the same ship with him, and the Cardinal asked him to dinner on Good Friday. He was extremely astonished to see nothing but meat on the table. The Cardinal, who noticed it, told him that his family possessed a bull of Alexander VI, allowing them and their guests to eat meat on any day in the year, and especially on Good Friday. The authority of such a strange Pope, used for so strange a purpose, was not sufficient for the company ; the Cardinal became angry, and said that to cast a doubt on the authority of the Papal bull was a crime which deserved excommunication. Respect for the day, however, prevailed over the bull

and over the example set by the Cardinal, who ate meat himself, and by persecution and threats of the censure of the Church induced as many of his guests as possible to do likewise.

On Easter Sunday the King landed at Pozzuolo, where he was met by the Duke of Escalona, viceroy of Naples, who took him in his galleys to Naples. While he was there engaged in distributing favours among all classes of the people, a conspiracy, which was inspired from Vienna, and hatched at Rome, was on the point of breaking out ; its object was nothing less than the assassination of the King of Spain. One of the conspirators betrayed the plot ; many Neapolitan noblemen were arrested ; some were executed ; in the meantime officers were sent secretly to Rome to seize the papers of Baron Isola, who was maintained there by the Emperor in some kind of diplomatic character. Such clear details of the plot and the means employed to carry it into execution were found among them that the Court of Vienna did not venture to protest against this high-handed action. To show his confidence in his subjects, the King of Spain then caused a regiment of guards to be raised, composed entirely of Neapolitans, to which he declared he would confide the care of his person. I do not know who advised him to take this step, but it very nearly proved fatal to him. M. de Vendôme discovered, through intercepted letters, that the officers of this regiment had made an agreement with Prince Eugène to deliver the King into his hands, alive or dead ; they intended to take him into the enemy's camp, and Prince Eugène was to send a party of 2,000 cavalry to meet them. Suspecting that their plot was discovered, nearly all the officers deserted ; and the regiment was immediately disbanded. This occurred after Philip V had arrived at Milan, where he was splendidly received by M. de Vaudemont.

When the Count d'Estrées had returned to Toulon with his squadron the Count de Toulouse set out to join it, accompanied by d'O, who was made an Admiral. As d'O had been attached to the suite of the Duke of Burgundy, and Cheverny, who was also a member of it, was unable through ill-health to accompany him on a campaign, or even to mount a horse, the King made a new appointment. He chose Gamaches, formerly known as Cayeux, whom he had placed in attendance on the Duke of Orleans before Monsieur's death, but

who was now out of employment because that Prince had a household of his own and had taken over nearly the whole of Monsieur's staff. This seemed even stranger than the former choices, but Gamaches, at any rate, was a man of honour and courage; he had spent nearly the whole of his life on active service, and was a Lieutenant-General. He attended the Duke of Burgundy to Flanders, together with Saumery, who had formerly been the Duke's sub-tutor.

M. du Maine was to serve in the same army, in which by seniority he ranked as the second Lieutenant-General; Rosen, Colonel-General of cavalry, was the first; the King wished to set him aside in favour of M. du Maine. He therefore sent for Rosen and told him that he wished to attach him to the person of the Duke of Burgundy, in order to act as his adviser. This proposal, which was accompanied by many complimentary speeches, flattered Rosen's vanity, and he accepted it. He was a cunning German, who, under the airs of a rough, uncultivated soldier, concealed a shrewd and supple wit; he soon perceived why the offer had been made to him, and regretted that he had been taken in. His ambition was to become a Marshal of France; as senior Lieutenant-General he commanded the right wing of the army, and took command of any considerable detachment which was to act as a separate corps. These functions were such as to put him in the way of obtaining a Marshal's bâton; but they were incompatible with the office of adviser to a young Prince, which moreover was liable to many annoyances at Court and in the army itself. Having considered the matter, Rosen went to the King and begged to be allowed to change his mind, as he did not feel competent to discharge the honourable duties which he had the goodness to assign to him; and he got out of it so cleverly that the King could not bear him a grudge. Instead of him the King appointed Artagnan, a man of cheerful disposition and easy manners, as well acquainted with the underground currents of the Court as with the management of his regiment of the Guards or his duties as Major-General. Thus accompanied, the heir-apparent to the Crown set out for Flanders; having only Moreau, his first *valet-de-chambre*, to wait on him, manage his household, and present people to him. M. de la Rochefoucauld thought it so unbecoming that, always free in his speech, he could not refrain from remonstrating with the King at his *lever*.

The King answered not a word. He was thinking less of the appearance his grandson would make in the eyes of the world than of the necessity for his passing through Cambrai, which could not be avoided without affectation. He was strictly forbidden to stop there even to eat ; and, in order to avoid the slightest communication with the Archbishop, he was not to alight from his carriage. Saumery had orders to see that these injunctions were strictly obeyed ; he performed his duty like an Argus, with an air of authority which scandalised everybody. The Archbishop was waiting at the post-house when they arrived, and immediately went up to his pupil's carriage ; Saumery, who had got out and informed him of the King's orders, was always at his elbow. The assembled crowd was touched by the delight shown by the young Prince when he caught sight of his tutor. He embraced him affectionately more than once, and at sufficient length to enable them to whisper a few words to each other, in spite of the importunate presence of Saumery. The halt was made only to change horses, but it was not done hurriedly. At starting there were more embraces, and the Prince and Archbishop separated, without anything being talked of between them except commonplaces about health, the journey, and the state of the roads. The scene had been so public and was observed by so many inquisitive eyes that it could not fail to become known everywhere. As the King's orders had been obeyed to the letter, he could not find fault if anything had been secretly expressed among the embraces, nor with the affectionate looks of the Prince and the Archbishop. The interview made a great impression at Court, and also in the army. In spite of the Archbishop's disgrace he was greatly respected in his diocese, and in the Netherlands generally. This feeling now extended itself to the army ; and from this time forth persons who had an eye to the future chose the route by Cambrai in preference to any other when travelling to or from Flanders.

The Duke of Burgundy stayed for seven or eight days at Brussels, where all the chief subjects of the King of Spain came to pay their respects to him. After this he went to place himself at the head of the Army ; but as if there had been a pre-arranged scheme to do everything with as little regard for propriety as possible, his equipages did not arrive for a fortnight, so that from the time he arrived at Brussels he and his small staff had to live with Marshal de Boufflers

at his expense. The King gave the Marshal 25,000 crowns for this extraordinary expenditure; at the same time he gave Tessé 50,000 livres for his expense during the blockade of Mantua, of which I may have occasion to speak.

War was now formally declared by England and Holland against France and Spain; the allied armies were commanded by the Earl of Athlone for the United Provinces, and by the Earl of Marlborough for the English. The name of the latter was Churchill; by birth he was a simple gentleman, but he had been a favourite of James II, and his sister was the mistress by whom that King became the father of the Duke of Berwick. He was in command of the troops at the time of the invasion of the Prince of Orange; to whom he would have betrayed the person of the King if Lord Feversham, brother to the Marshals de Duras and de Lorge, had not suspected a trap, and dissuaded him from holding a review at the camp. Marlborough's wife had been Lady of Honour to Princess Anne before she came to the throne, and was her chief favourite. Soon afterwards he was made a Duke and Knight of the Garter. Our misfortunes have made his name so great that there will be only too many occasions to mention him in the future.

It was thought that Marshal de Boufflers, through indecision, lost a favourable opportunity for beating him at the beginning of the campaign, and it never recurred. Venloo, Ruremonde, and the citadel of Liège fell into the enemy's hands during the campaign, and were the first-fruits of his good fortune. The Duke of Burgundy showed much courage and zeal; but he was in leading-strings; all he could do was to prove that he could stand fire, and propose various expeditions, showing that he wished to do something. As the army was not in a condition to take the offensive, he was recalled to Versailles, after several indecisive artillery actions. M. du Maine soon followed him; he had had opportunities for proving himself worthy of the post of senior Lieutenant-General; Marshal de Boufflers hoped he would distinguish himself; but he did not belie his former reputation. The King was bitterly disappointed; it was a renewal of his old grief; but he perceived clearly that it was useless to offer laurels to this much-beloved son, and he resolved, with a heavy heart, not to expose him again to dangers so little to his taste.

The Count de Toulouse was cruising in the Mediterranean

When in the vicinity of Civita-Vecchia he sent d'O to convey his respects to the Pope, who gave him a very favourable reception. The Pope afterwards send his compliments in the same way to the Count de Toulouse, having discovered that a similar honour had formerly been paid to Don John¹ of Austria. The King was much gratified by this mark of attention.

About this time the King decided a singular lawsuit. Father d'Aubercourt had left the Jesuits some years after taking the vows ; he now claimed that he was restored to his secular rights, and demanded his share of the family inheritance. Among the regular orders in the Church the Jesuits are peculiar in this respect, that besides the ordinary vows they have a fourth, which is only taken by certain chosen brethren ; it is kept very secret, and the majority of the Society do not know which of their members have been admitted to it. They claim that, while the members of the Society are bound to it, there is no reciprocity ; that is, the Jesuits who have taken the three ordinary vows cannot leave the Society, but, on the other hand, they can be dismissed at any time, provided that they have not taken the fourth vow. Consequently, a Jesuit dismissed after perhaps fifteen or twenty years had a right to claim his share of any property just as if he had remained secular. They had extracted from Henry IV, in 1604, a declaration which seemed to favour this pretension ; and had always turned it to good account when the case arose. They now intervened on behalf of Father d'Aubercourt, whose family opposed his claim ; and they had sufficient influence to cause the suit to be heard before the King in person, thinking that he would be favourable to them. They were not mistaken : the King was altogether on their side, and took care that the judges should know it. But the majority of the judges did not try to curry favour with him on this occasion ; in giving their decision they thought only of the subversion of family arrangements which would be caused by these tardy returns to secular life, and the ruinous uncertainty in which all families would be if any of their members were Jesuits. The Chancellor in particular expressed himself so strongly that the case was decided against d'Aubercourt and the Jesuits ; moreover, to prevent any such claims being made in future the edict of 1604 was repealed. The King was

¹ Although a bastard, like the Count de Toulouse.

unwilling to use his prerogative to set aside a judgement of such importance to families, but he could not refrain from showing his displeasure ; he yielded so far to his affection for the Jesuits as to pronounce, on his own authority, that Jesuits who had been dismissed from their Society should receive a life-annuity from their families, the amount of it to be settled by the local judges. Nevertheless, the decision of the Court was a great disappointment to the Jesuits.

I would not dwell on the trivial occurrence which I am about to relate were it not that it marks a very important epoch in my life, and shows how trifles may sometimes have very serious consequences. About the end of July the King went to stay at Marly. The Duchess of Orleans was delighted with the freedom she had acquired since Monsieur's death ; in order to enjoy it thoroughly, she wished to have a Court at St. Cloud. The King gave his approval, on condition that the company should be good, and not mixed ; but those who had belonged to Monsieur's more intimate circle could not, of course, be excluded. Among other ladies she begged Madame de Saint-Simon to stay at St. Cloud, and the invitation was accepted. We wished, however, to go to La Ferté for six weeks ; when the date of the visit to St. Cloud was finally settled, which was not till after the arrangements had been made for Marly, the Duchess of Orleans saw that it would be during our stay at La Ferté, and before Madame de Saint-Simon left she made her promise to come back the very day she went to St. Cloud, of which she would give her notice. Accordingly the Duchess de Villeroy wrote in her name to La Ferté, and Madame de Saint-Simon went to St. Cloud as she had promised. The company there was well chosen, and the pleasures and amusements were unending. The Duke and Duchess of Orleans did the honours of that beautiful place with great politeness ; and for the first time St. Cloud was free from petty squabbles.

From my earliest childhood I had seen a great deal of the Duke of Orleans. This familiarity lasted till some time after he entered the world, even till after the campaign of 1693, when he commanded the cavalry of Marshal de Luxembourg's army, in which I was serving. Having been kept under strict restraint he made up for it, when emancipated, by licentious conduct. A bad example was set him by the disorderly lives of M. de Duc and the Prince of Conti ; the

profligates of the Court and town got him into their toils ; disgust at the unequal marriage which he had been forced into made him seek other pleasures ; disappointment at seeing himself passed over for the command of an army, and the King's failure to keep his promises, drove him finally into a life of debauchery, and he made a point of parading it, to show his contempt for his wife and for the King's displeasure. This kind of life did not suit mine, it caused a cessation of familiarity with the Duke ; for six or seven years I hardly ever met him. When I did meet him he always seemed pleased to see me, but my mode of life did not suit him any more than his suited me, so that the separation became complete. Monsieur's death had necessarily brought him back to the King and to his wife ; but his pleasures were not interrupted. He behaved more politely to her, and more respectfully to the King, but unfortunately debauchery had grown into a habit ; he had taken it into his head that it gave him an air of fashion, suitable to his age, contrasting agreeably with the ridicule which he thought attached to a more regular life. Though his conduct at Court was slightly altered, there was no change in his morals ; his secret parties at Paris went on as usual, and caused him to be always running backwards and forwards. It is not yet time to describe the character of this Prince, whom we shall see playing such a leading part on the world's stage, and in so many different situations.

Among the guests at St. Cloud was Madame de Fontainemartel, one of the ladies who had belonged to Monsieur's Court, and had passed her whole life in the very best society. She used often to go to supper at the house of Marshal de Lorge, who kept an excellent cook, and always entertained a great number of guests, of the best society of the Court. They came without invitations ; the Maréchale had in perfection the art of doing the honours of a great house, and it attracted people there ; yet she never allowed the company to become mixed, as is often the case. I used to behave politely to everybody there, but there were some of the guests whom I did not like, and consequently they did not like me. I often met Madame de Fontainemartel there, and we took a mutual liking to each other ; a friendship sprang up between us which always lasted. She used to ask me sometimes why I never saw the Duke of Orleans nowadays, and said it was absurd of us both not to meet more often,

for, in spite of our different habits, we were suited to each other in many ways. I used to laugh, and pay no attention to her. One day at St. Cloud she attacked the Duke of Orleans on the same subject while he was talking to her, the Duchess de Villeroy, and Madame de Saint-Simon ; and the Duke said he regretted that I found him too much of a libertine to associate with him, and he would be extremely glad to renew our friendship. The subject was brought up again during the visit, and he went so far as to say that he was sorry it was too late to ask me to St. Cloud, but on our return to Versailles he should endeavour to overcome my austerity, as he called it. He asked Madame de Saint-Simon to write to me about it, and I made a suitable reply. She returned to La Ferté, and told me that matters had gone so far that I could not help myself.

I had taken all that as a whim of Madame de Fontaine-martel's, and what the Duke of Orleans had said as merely civil expressions on his part ; I thought it was only one of those vague projects which are mentioned casually but never carried out ; I was convinced that our lives and tastes were so different that the Prince and I would never suit each other, and that I should do well to confine myself on my return to a simple visit of thanks and respect. I was mistaken ; my visit, which I had kept putting off till the Duke of Orleans said something reproachful about it, was warmly and eagerly received. Whether it was that the old friendship of our boyhood had revived, or that he wanted to have some one to talk to familiarly at Versailles, where he was often very much bored, he received me so kindly that I thought the old days of the Palais-Royal had come back. He begged me to see him often ; may I venture to say that he was proud of bringing me back to him, and that he spared no pains to hold me fast ? The return of my old affection for him was the fruit of these advances on his part ; before long it was sealed by a thorough confidence between us which lasted without a break until his death, in spite of a few short interruptions caused by intrigues, when he had become the ruler of the State. Such was the beginning of that close intimacy which exposed me to some dangers and made me play a leading part in the world for a time ; I may say without vanity that it was no less useful to the Prince than to myself, and that it was his own fault if he did not derive even more advantage from it.

I must here add another trifle, because I have always thought that its consequences were just the contrary of those which I have just mentioned, and that it threw many stumbling-blocks in my way ; in order of time it came a little later, but I will speak of it now because the consequences of these two affairs were continually mixed up with each other, in many curious and important matters, as will be seen later on.

M. de Lausun, always occupied with the affairs of the Court, and profoundly grieved at the loss of his old favour, left no stone unturned to recover his position. He took advantage of his old friendship with Madame d'Heudicourt in the time of Madame de Montespan, and the cessions he had made to M. du Maine to obtain his release from Pignerol, thinking by that means to interest Madame de Maintenon in his favour and to get her to use her influence with the King. He wished his young wife to be under the protection of Madame d'Heudicourt in order that she might have a share in all the amusements of the Court, and he had himself introduced her into the circle of Madame du Maine. Madame de Lausun was young, good, lively, and amiable, and she was much liked in that society ; her husband made her play high, and she had good luck at it ; she was often in request for that reason. Madame du Maine could not do without her ; she was always being asked to Sceaux. M. du Maine was endeavouring to secure the best society for his wife ; he tried to get hold of Madame de Saint-Simon by means of her sister. She went there ; it was one way of pleasing the King ; but she did not go very often. I had reason to believe that M. and Madame du Maine wished to gain my friendship ; they knew how odious their rank was to me. Personally I was very far from being a formidable adversary, but their policy was to lose no opportunity of acquiring allies, in their uncertainty as to what might happen in the future ; and I think they looked upon me as a thorn which might possibly prick them some day, and had better be removed. They took to speaking of me in a most flattering way to my wife and sister-in-law ; told them how much they wished to see me at Sceaux, and begged them to convey an invitation from them, and bring me with them.

I was surprised at receiving such advances from people with whom I had never had any intercourse ; but I suspected their motive, and remained on my guard. Their new rank



William III

was insufferable to me ; I trusted to see it abolished some day, and hoped I might myself be able to do something towards its abolition. With these feelings how could I begin an acquaintance with them which would before long become a friendship ? They had it in their power to obtain for me a renewal of the King's favour ; I felt that they wished to place me under an obligation and bind me to their party ; how could I yield to their advances and receive favours from them while I still retained my aversion for their rank, and the firm resolution to abolish it if it should ever be in my power to do so ? Such duplicity was incompatible with honourable and straightforward conduct. It was in vain that I reflected on my present situation ; no prospect of regaining the King's favour was comparable with the hope of some day being delivered from their odious dignity. I adhered steadfastly to my system of complimentary excuses and polite refusals ; I even resisted the reproaches of Madame du Maine, who stopped me one day in the King's apartments, although I had never spoken to her before ; at last they grew weary of pursuing me. They felt that I did not wish to be intimate with them, and were very much annoyed ; but they would not show it, and redoubled their attentions to Madame de Saint-Simon.

I have always thought that from this time M. du Maine tried to injure me, and set Madame de Maintenon against me ; she did not know me in the least, yet, though I only discovered it after the King's death, she simply hated me. Chamillart told me so at that time, and also that he had had some disputes with her on my account, trying to get her to restore me to the King's good graces, so far as going to Marly and things of that sort were concerned. I had suspected that she was not favourable to me, but while the King lived I did not know all that I learnt afterwards. Chamillart had very wisely been unwilling to alarm me ; he was also afraid of my tongue, for I was always too ready to let it go when I thought I had reason to dislike people, and it was never restrained by any consideration for their greatness or power.

I will finish this account of the relations between M. du Maine and myself, so far as that period is concerned. Some considerable time afterwards the Duchess of Burgundy kept Madame de Lausun to play at Marly ; it was the day of the departure of the Court, and, as Madame de Lausun had come

with Madame du Maine, she ought to have returned with her. She said so to the Duchess of Burgundy, who would not accept the excuse, but told her to send a message to Madame du Maine to say that she would bring her back herself. Madame du Maine was so silly as to be angry about it, and next day spoke so rudely to Madame de Lausun that she went out of the house and never entered it again. M. du Maine and M. le Prince came to her with apologies, to beg her pardon; they did all they could to get round M. de Lausun, and he almost yielded to them, but his wife could not be persuaded to overlook the affront.

I was delighted that Madame de Saint-Simon should have so reasonable an excuse for withdrawing from a place where the company had been for some time becoming extremely mixed, to say the least of it, and where, after all that I have related, her attendance could do us no good. From that time she never saw Madame du Maine except on formal occasions, though she and M. du Maine did all they could to prevent her from leaving them. I think this occurrence completed the rupture between us, if indeed it was not complete before. After this adventure at Marly the Duchess of Burgundy always took Madame de Lausun there herself; it was a great distinction, and Madame du Maine was extremely annoyed at it.

To conclude: some years afterwards M. du Maine and M. de Lausun wished to put an end to this quarrel, and it was arranged between them that Madame du Maine should apologise to Madame de Lausun in the rooms of Madame la Princesse at Versailles, that her apology should be received politely, and that two days later Madame de Lausun should call on Madame du Maine; and all was carried out accordingly. M. du Maine was present in his wife's room when Madame de Lausun came, to relieve the embarrassment of the situation, and help in the conversation. Madame de Lausun confined herself to this one visit, and only saw Madame du Maine on public occasions; Madame de Saint-Simon, of course, followed her example. All this story may seem superfluous, but it will be seen later on that these occurrences were not unimportant.

CHAPTER IV

1702

Relief of Mantua—The King of Spain at the battle of Luzzara—Unsuccessful attack on Cadiz—Spanish treasure-ships put into Vigo—The English attack and sink them—Landau invested—The Prince d'Auvergne deserts to the enemy—He is hanged in effigy—Canaples—Death of the Duke de Coislin—His peculiarities—Villars crosses the Rhine—Battle of Friedlingen—An agreeable surprise for a despairing General—Villars appointed Marshal—His character—Death of Marshal de Lorge—His history and character—His conversion from Protestantism—*Sauvegardes*

IN Italy M. de Vendôme succeeded in relieving Mantua, which had been closely blockaded for some time by the Imperialists under Prince Eugène. On the 15th of August a battle took place at Luzzara, at which the King of Spain was present. He was exposed for a long time to a very hot fire, and behaved with coolness and intrepidity. He was amused at the symptoms of fear which he thought he observed in some members of his staff; but, strange to say, showed no curiosity to see what was going on in other parts of the field. At last Louville proposed that he should retire to some trees in the neighbourhood, where he would be out of the sun, but in reality where he would be less exposed to danger. He went, and remained there with the same phlegmatic tranquillity. Towards the end of the day Louville suggested that he should go to the front again; he went with great alacrity, and showed himself to the troops. The slaughter was great on both sides, and the battle was indecisive, both armies remaining on their own ground.

On our side the Marquis de Créquy, only son of the late Marshal de Créquy, was killed; he held the rank of Lieutenant-General, and would before long have obtained the bâton of a Marshal, which he would have borne as worthily as his father before him. The Imperialists lost the Prince de Commercy, son of Madame de Lislebonne, who was killed; and Prince Thomas de Vaudemont, only son of the Prince

of Vaudemont, who was severely wounded, and died of his wounds two years later. They were both Field-Mmarshals, and ranked next to Prince Eugène. The grief of Madame de Lislebonne and her two daughters was excessive, though they had not seen the Prince de Commercy for more than twenty years, and in all probability would never have seen him again. Monseigneur showed so much sympathy for them that they were regarded with even more respect than before ; he seemed to think only of how he might comfort them. One becomes accustomed to strange things in a Court ; nevertheless, this solicitude on the part of the Dauphin for a grief which ought not to have been displayed so openly was the subject of much comment. The news of the battle of Luzzara was brought by the Duke de Villeroy, who returned to Italy after a few days with the rank of Lieutenant-General.

The Duke of Ormond attempted to surprise Cadiz, which had a very insufficient garrison. Meeting with no opposition, he landed 10,000 men in the Isla de Leon, while his ships lay at anchor in the roadstead. They remained there for nearly two months, hoping to form a rallying point for the partisans of the House of Austria, but no one stirred ; on the contrary, the people were disgusted at the way in which the enemy plundered the country, especially the churches, and took up arms against them. At last Villadarias marched to Cadiz with such troops as he could collect, and the English and Dutch regained their ships. Their retreat was hotly pursued, and they lost a good many men, besides those who had died of disease during their stay in the island, or had been killed while marauding. This expedition, which was costly in men and money, was quite futile. M. de Darmstadt, who accompanied it, had made the enemy believe that a general insurrection would take place in Spain if a sufficient force were sent to support it ; but the result was a great disappointment.

Soon afterwards, the treasure-ships from America, which were nearly two years overdue, arrived, escorted by Château-neuf and his squadron. It was not considered safe for them to go to Cadiz, so they were taken to Vigo. Renault, of whom I shall have occasion to speak again, protested in vain against this decision ; he said the ships were not safe at Vigo, and urged that they should go to Cadiz. He was not listened to, and every one rejoiced at the safe return of the

galleons, which were filled with treasure. Fortunately, the precaution was taken to unload them as quickly as possible and transport the gold and most precious objects to Lugo, thirty leagues inland. While this was proceeding the English fleet appeared; a force was landed, which seized the forts and batteries of Vigo; the chain which defended the harbour was broken, Châteauneuf's ships, fifteen in number, were burnt, and all the galleons. There were no troops in Vigo, and the disaster was unavoidable; it occurred on the 23rd of October, and caused general consternation, for unfortunately there were still goods remaining in the galleons to the value of 8,000,000 livres. Châteauneuf collected a force, consisting of the sailors of his fleet and a few militia, to defend the passes between Vigo and Lugo, while the treasure which had been landed was dragged by an immense number of oxen and mules to Madrid.

The campaign on the Rhine was not more successful than that in Flanders. The movements of our army were greatly hampered by the fortresses of Brisach, Fribourg, Kehl, and Philipsburg, which had been restored to the enemy at the peace of Ryswick; and the Elector-Palatine had occupied the lines of Spirebach, which cut off the communications of our army with Landau, and prevented it from availing itself of the supplies furnished by the rich plains which extend from Landau to Mayence. Landau was weakly fortified; Mélac, the Governor, seeing the enemy's preparations, had sent repeated warnings of the danger during the preceding winter; but, unfortunately, our Government was still under the delusion that war would be avoided, and nothing was done. Cattinat had no sooner taken command of his very indifferent army, towards the end of June, than he learnt that Landau was besieged. He found it hopeless to attack the lines of Spirebach, and did nothing during the campaign but manœuvre round Strasbourg and feed his army at the expense of Lower Alsace.

The Prince d'Auvergne was serving in this army as Colonel of a cavalry regiment. He was a stout, stupid fellow; very disagreeable; his head was full of his exalted birth and the chimeras of his family. He was the sole heir of his family, for his eldest brother had died recently, and the two others were in priests' orders. His father had behaved very harshly to him; though he had been ordered by several courts of law to pay his children their mother's portion, they

had not been able to extract anything from him. At the outset of the campaign the Prince d'Auvergne paid a visit to Cardinal de Bouillon in his place of exile, and it seemed to turn his head completely. Being in command of a piquet, one day he went to visit the sentries at the outposts; when he reached them he struck spurs into his horse, and deserted to the enemy like a private soldier. He left on his table a letter for Chamillart, composed in a haughty and confused style, in which he said that, not having enough to live on, he was going to an aunt of his in Bavaria. He did go to Munich, but did not stay there long; he went on to Holland, and during the course of the winter became a Major-General in the Dutch army.

If the question of subsistence had been his real reason he had only to speak to the King, who already allowed him 6,000 livres a year, and he would have had either an increased allowance, or permission to live at Bergen-op-Zoom on condition of not serving against France. But he had been seduced by the chimeras of his uncle, the Cardinal. He flattered himself that he would be considered a person of distinction in Holland, on account of his relationship to the late King William and to the Prince of Nassau, hereditary Governor of Friesland; as well as to the family of Hohen-zollern, from which he was descended through his mother. He hoped also to win the favour of the Grand Pensionary Heinsius, who was all-powerful in Holland, and a bitter enemy to France; he chose desertion from our service as a means of establishing himself in Holland which would prevent any suspicion with regard to his good faith.

Not to have to return to the subject, I will relate what came of this desertion in the end, though I shall be anticipating matters by more than a year. It caused a great sensation; the Bouillon family blamed the Prince d'Auvergne, but pitied his misfortunes; they laid stress on his retirement to Munich, and represented that his conduct was more the effect of folly than of any criminal intention. The King liked the Duke de Bouillon, and thought the Prince d'Auvergne no great loss; so he let the matter drop, and it ceased to be talked about. But after the Prince went to Holland, in order to please his new masters he allowed his tongue great licence, and at the sack of Venloo behaved with more cruelty than any of the enemies. He went about everywhere showing his sword, which he declared was that

of M. de Turenne, and which he would make as fatal to France as it had been victorious in her service. This could not be passed over, and the King ordered the Prince d'Auvergne to be tried in his absence for desertion.

The Bouillon family endeavoured to have the trial conducted as if the culprit had been a Peer, but in vain ; the rank of foreign Prince, secured to them by the exchange of Sedan, is ignored by the Parliament of Paris, which recognises no Princes except those of the blood-royal, and no rank or distinction except those of our own country. The deserter was sentenced, in the terms used for any common malefactor, to be hanged ; and, until his person could be secured, to be hanged in effigy ; which was carried out in the Place de la Grève, and his name, with the sentence, affixed to the gallows for three days. So the Bouillon family, though they were accustomed to derive some advantage even from their treasons and most disgraceful crimes, got nothing out of this except the spectacle for the second time of a son of the Count d'Auvergne hanging on a gibbet, only a very few years after the first one.

The siege of Landau did not progress so rapidly as Prince Louis of Baden, who commanded the besieging force, had expected ; and Mélac, the Governor, did all he could to prolong the defence. Villars was ordered to march with a strong detachment from the army of Flanders to reinforce Cattinat, and the latter was to do his utmost to relieve the place ; but both Generals considered the lines of Spirebach impregnable, and sent word to the Court that nothing could be done. Cattinat was then ordered to divide his forces, and send the larger portion, under Villars, towards Huningen, to join the Elector of Bavaria, who had just declared himself on our side, and offered to put 25,000 men in the field on the Upper Rhine.

In the meantime Landau surrendered, on the 10th of September, after holding out a month longer than had been considered possible. The siege cost many lives on both sides ; among others the Count de Soissons was mortally wounded. He was brother to Prince Eugène, and son of the Countess de Soissons who had so many strange adventures, and was suspected of having poisoned her husband. He was brought up in France by his grandmother, the Princess de Carignan. He was a man of little ability, much given to pleasure, and a spendthrift who often borrowed money but seldom repaid

it. His birth brought him into good society, but his taste was for low company. At the age of twenty-five he fell madly in love with the illegitimate daughter of La Cropte-Beauvais, Equerry to M. le Prince, the hero ; and married her, to the despair of his relations. She was a person of virtue, and very beautiful, tall and dark, with the handsome features which artists give to a sultana or a Roman beauty ; her manners were dignified and engaging, though she had little or no ability. Her charms took the Court by surprise, and were almost looked upon as a reasonable excuse for the Count de Soissons. There was no doubt about her being a bastard. When her father was on his death-bed M. le Prince went to him and implored him, to marry her mother, representing to him the false position in which this beautiful daughter was placed. But Beauvais was inexorable ; he said he had not deceived the woman ; he had never promised her marriage, and did not intend to marry her ; and so he died. I do not know where the daughter was brought up afterwards, nor how the Count de Soissons came to meet her. She was inconsolable at her husband's death, and, though still surprisingly beautiful, retired to a convent near Turin. Prince Eugène adopted their children, but they all died young ; so that Prince Eugène, who never married, was the last of this branch of the family, descended from the famous Duke Charles Emmanuel of Savoy ; the same who was defeated by Louis XIII at the Pass of Susa.

Canaples, brother of the late Marshal-Duke de Créquy, had become the head of his family through the death of the Marquis de Créquy, killed at Luzzara ; though the dukedom, which had been created for the Marshal without remainder to his brothers, had become extinct. Being very rich, Canaples determined to marry, in order to carry on the family. He was such a thoroughly stupid man that his brothers had never been able to do anything for him. Marshal de Villeroy, whose mother was a Créquy, obtained the Governorship of Lyons for him at the death of his uncle the Archbishop, who had held it all his life. Canaples was always committing some absurdity there ; the ladies who went to meet the Duchess of Burgundy at the frontier, and who stayed at Lyons for some days, told me that they had seen Canaples walking slowly through the streets blessing the people to right and left. He had seen the Archbishop doing so, and imagined that it was a privilege of his office.

He also thought he had a right to give letters dimissory, and meddle with the internal discipline of the clergy. In short, though the most excellent of men, he committed so many follies that he had to be recalled, and he came back to bore the society of Paris and the Court.

Having made up his mind to marry, he cast his eyes upon Mademoiselle de Vivonne, who was no longer young, and, though of high birth, with plenty of virtue and wit, had not a penny in the world. Her father the Marshal, brother to Madame de Montespan, was so completely ruined when he died that his widow, who had brought him great wealth and had herself been very extravagant, was obliged to live in the house of her steward, and had hardly enough to keep her there. Mademoiselle de Vivonne, who was sister to the late Duke de Mortemart, to the Duchess d'Elbœuf, and to Madame de Castries, was living with Madame de Montespan. The latter took care of her, and provided her with everything, even with her clothes; she thought her niece lucky to have the chance of marrying this rich old man, and the marriage was arranged. When the rumour of it began to spread Cardinal de Coislin spoke to Canaples on the subject, thinking him very old to marry. Canaples said he was marrying because he wished to have children. "Children, sir!" said the Cardinal; "but she is so very virtuous!" Everybody burst out laughing; the more so because the Cardinal, whose morals were very pure, was as a rule singularly careful about what he said. It turned out that he was a true prophet, for the marriage proved sterile.

The Duke de Coislin died soon afterwards, to the great grief of his brother the Cardinal, and of all honest people. He was a very small man, and his appearance was not distinguished; but he was honour, courage, and probity personified. He was not without ability; his memory, which was exact and tenacious, was stored with facts; there was an immense amount of curious information to be got out of him. His politeness was so excessive that it drove people to despair, yet he always preserved his dignity. He had served with distinction as Lieutenant-General, and succeeded Bussy-Rabutin as Colonel-General of the cavalry; but he would not take advantage of the disgrace into which Bussy-Rabutin had fallen to obtain the appointment at less than the usual price. With all his good qualities, which caused him to be generally respected, and earned for him

the favour of the King, he was so singular in his ways that I cannot refrain from telling a few stories of him.

A German Rhinegrave was taken prisoner in a skirmish, and was assigned to the care of the Duke de Coislin, who wished to give up his bed to him, or, as a compromise, a mattress. They were so extremely polite to each other that it ended by their both sleeping on the floor, one on each side of the mattress. When the Duke returned to Paris the Rhinegrave came to call on him ; as he was going away the Duke wished to reconduct him to his carriage ; so many compliments were exchanged that at last the Rhinegrave bolted out of the room and locked the door on the outside. M. de Coislin was not to be outdone ; he instantly jumped out of the window, into the courtyard, and got to the carriage before the Rhinegrave, who thought the devil must have carried him there. It is true that, in jumping, he put his thumb out of joint, and Félix, First Surgeon to the King, put it in again for him. Some days later Félix came to see how he was, and found the thumb quite cured ; as he was taking leave M. de Coislin insisted on opening the door for him ; Félix would not hear of it, and a polite struggle took place between them. In the middle of it the Duke suddenly let go the door ; his thumb was out of joint again, and Félix had to set to work upon it immediately. As may be supposed, he told the story to the King, and it caused much amusement.

There would be no end to these stories of his extreme politeness. One day when Madame de Saint-Simon and I were driving back from Fontainebleau we saw him on foot by the side of the road with his son, the Bishop of Metz ; his carriage had broken down, and we sent to ask him to get into ours. Polite messages were exchanged, and, as they seemed to be interminable, I had to get out in the mud and ask him myself to take a seat in our carriage. The Bishop was driven wild by his compliments, and at last managed to persuade him ; but then, when he had nothing to do but walk to my carriage, he began to protest again, and declared that he could not think of depriving the young ladies of their places. I told him the " young ladies " were two maid-servants, who could very well wait till his carriage was mended, and come on in it ; it was all in vain, we had to promise that one of them, at any rate, should remain. When we came to my carriage the two maids got out ; while

he was making his apologetic speeches to them, which were not short, I told the footman who was holding the door open to shut it directly I got in, and tell the coachman to drive on. But the moment he felt the carriage move M. de Coislin began shouting that he would jump out if we did not stop to pick up the young lady, and if I had not caught him just in time by the waistbelt he would have thrown himself out of the window. As he continued to struggle I called out to stop, and the "young lady" maidservant was called. She had picked up a good deal of mud on her way to his carriage which she brought back to us, and she almost crushed the Bishop of Metz and myself in the carriage, which was only meant for four people.

Two adventures of a different kind happened to him during a visit of the King to Nancy. The Duke de Créquy, on arriving in the town, did not approve of the quarters assigned to him. He was rough and overbearing in his manners, and spoilt by the favour which he enjoyed at Court ; he went and dislodged the Duke de Coislin, who, when he arrived, found all his servants turned out into the street, and learnt the reason from them. The Duke de Créquy was his senior ; so he did not say a word, but immediately went with his servants to the quarters of Marshal de Créquy and served him as he had been served by his brother. The Marshal arrived in his turn, and descended impetuously on the house of Cavoye, whom he turned into the street, to teach him to allot quarters in future in such a way as to avoid these cascades.

It was one of the Duke de Coislin's peculiarities that he could not bear receiving the "last touch," a childish game in which the person touched has to run after and catch the giver of the touch. During this same visit to Nancy M. de Longueville, having arranged matters beforehand with two of his pages, who carried torches, touched M. de Coislin as they were retiring from the King's *coucher*, told him that he had the last touch, and immediately ran away. The Duke started in pursuit ; M. de Longueville, having gained on him a little, hid himself in a door-way and watched M. de Coislin run past as hard as he could. The two pages with their torches led him all round the town, till at last he was obliged to give up the chase and returned home dripping with perspiration. He had to laugh at the joke, but he was not very well pleased with it.

He had another, and more serious adventure, in which he was taken by surprise and showed himself a man of ready resource. The second son of the Duke de Bouillon was brought up for the Church, and was to defend a thesis at the Sorbonne in ceremony. In those days the Princes of the Blood used to attend on ceremonial occasions when persons of distinction were concerned; and M. le Prince, M. le Duc (afterwards Prince of Condé), and the two Princes of Conti, who were then children, were present at this thesis. M. de Coislin arrived just after them, and, as he was one of the junior Dukes, he left several arm-chairs vacant between him and the angle formed by the seats allotted to the prelates. The Princes of the Blood had their chairs apart, facing the seat of the presiding prelate. Novion, First-President, arrived, accompanied by several *présidents-à-mortier*, and, after paying his respects to the Princes, sat down in the arm-chair nearest the above-mentioned angle. The Duke de Coislin was surprised at this piece of folly, but let him sit down, half facing Cardinal de Bouillon; he then got up, planted an arm-chair in front of the First-President, and sat down in it. This caused some commotion, but M. de Coislin pushed back his chair so as to prevent the First-President from moving. Cardinal de Bouillon tried to interfere, but M. de Coislin said that, since the First-President had forgotten what was due to him, he was in his proper place; and the First-President, taken by surprise, and enraged at having to submit to this insult, without being able to move, did not know what to do. There was a murmur among the *présidents-à-mortier*, and Cardinal de Bouillon and his brothers, who were doing the honours, sent for M. le Prince, and begged him to put an end to the dispute. M. le Prince blamed the First-President to his face, but asked M. de Coislin to let him out. He refused to do so until M. le Prince had pledged himself that the First-President should leave the room immediately, for when the latter gave his own word, M. de Coislin told him that he despised him too much to take it, and must have the word of M. le Prince that there should be no more sleight-of-hand tricks. Having received it, he rose and pulled aside his chair, saying to the First-President: "Go along, sir, go along." The First-President immediately went out in great confusion, attended by the *présidents-à-mortier*, and regained his carriage. The Duke de Coislin

went back to his original place, and remained till the end of the ceremony.

Next morning he attended the *lever*; the King had already heard of the affair. As soon as he saw M. de Coislin he spoke to him about it, commending what he had done, and speaking of the First-President as an impertinent person who had forgotten himself; strong words, for the King was usually very guarded in his expressions. Then, calling the Duke into his private room, he made him not only relate but act the scene. He afterwards sent for the First-President and reproved him severely, asking him what had put it into his head to claim precedence over Dukes anywhere except in Parliament, on which point he reserved his decision; he further ordered him to call on the Duke de Coislin and beg his pardon, and not merely to leave his name at the door, but to find him at home. The shame and rage of Novion may be imagined; he got the Duke de Gesvres and other friends to intercede with M. de Coislin, who had the generosity to dispense with the personal apology, and took the responsibility of not admitting him when he called. The King praised the Duke de Coislin for this magnanimity.

M. de Coislin was truth itself. He had been a great friend of my father's, and always received me with kindness, and spoke freely before me. I have often heard him tell this story, and many other curious anecdotes. He was extremely sensitive; so much so, that his brother, the Cardinal, obtained the reversion of his office of Grand Almoner for the Abbé de Coislin without ever telling his brother that he had asked for it; he was afraid he would take a refusal too much to heart. For the same reason the Cardinal got the King to promise never to refuse his brother an invitation if he gave in his name for Marly; so that he always went there whenever he pleased; it is true that he did not abuse the privilege. He was not very old, but crippled with gout, which attacked even his eyes, nose, and tongue. Even when he was in this condition his room was always full of the best society of the Court, for he was universally liked and respected. He was very poor, for his mother, who was rich, survived him. He left two sons and one daughter, the Duchess de Sully.

This First-President, Novion, was a most iniquitous man, who would do anything for money or for his obscure mis-

tresses. The law-courts suffered for a long time from his caprices, and the suitors from his injustice. At last, in 1689, he was dismissed from his office, and Harlay appointed in his stead. We shall see his grandson filling the same office ; very unworthy of it, and of all the other posts which he had held.

The Court went to Fontainebleau on the 19th of September. On the 9th of October Mélaç arrived there, and had an audience of the King, who gave him a pension of 15,000 livres, besides continuing his pay as Governor of Landau, as a reward for his brilliant defence of that place. Mélaç, however, was disappointed, for he thought he deserved some mark of honour ; and his disappointment was increased when soon afterwards he saw honours heaped upon a man, as I shall have to relate immediately, who would certainly not have had an opportunity of gaining them on the other side of the Rhine, if Landau had not held out beyond all expectation.

Mélaç was a gentleman of Guyenne, of cultivated parts, and a lively imagination ; his fiery nature sometimes led him into mistakes in war, and also in private life ; he was a good partisan leader, bold in his enterprises and skilful in carrying them out, and always disinterested. His home was with the army on the frontier ; his whole life had been spent in war, summer and winter ; nearly always in Germany. He had struck terror into the enemy by his frequent enterprises, and kept them on the alert within a radius of twenty miles ; he used to amuse himself by making them think that he was a magician. He was very touchy and irritable with any one whom he suspected of bearing ill-will to him, and too ready to take offence ; but he was very good-natured, and would bear anything from a friend. He was warmly attached to the Marshals Duras and Lorge, particularly to my father-in-law, who charged me to do all I could for him when he should be no more. On one occasion he took offence at something the Chevalier d'Asfeld said in Marshal de Choiseul's quarters, and used violent language to him in the presence of several Generals. Chamilly came to tell me of it. I went to see the Marshal, who might have punished Mélaç severely for his want of respect, but he was good enough to overlook the offence to himself. I then saw Mélaç, and I cannot give a better proof of how good-natured he was with his friends than by

saying that I used the plainest language to him, such as I was really ashamed to use ; for I was only a young Colonel, and he was a Lieutenant-General of old standing and great reputation. He confessed to me that he had been in the wrong, and agreed to make such reparation as I thought fit. A reconciliation was effected between him and the Chevalier d'Asfeld, and no ill-feeling remained. On the whole, Mélac was an excellent soldier : poor, sober, frugal, and thinking of nothing but the public service.

It would be ridiculous to mention the death of Petit, but for certain reasons. He was a very old man, and had for many years been physician to Monseigneur. He had ability, learning, and experience, yet he died without having ever admitted the fact of the circulation of the blood. That seems so singular as to be worth recording. Another reason for mentioning him is that he was succeeded in his office by Boudin, of whom I shall have occasion to speak in connection with very serious matters.

While at Fontainebleau the King heard of the release of Marshal de Villeroy ; the Emperor was so generous as to forgo his ransom, which would have amounted to 50,000 livres. The King was glad to hear of the Marshal's freedom, but it eventually cost France dear.

Cattinat soon felt the consequences of his interview with the King respecting Italian affairs ; he had cleared himself with the King, it is true, but the Minister had been convicted of concealment, and Madame de Maintenon had been compromised. He was now denied everything necessary for a successful campaign, and his mortification at being compelled to make an inglorious one rendered him moody and quarrelsome, so that his Generals and officers were discontented. It was necessary to march to the assistance of the Elector of Bavaria, and our Government suggested to Cattinat that he should attempt the passage of the Rhine ; perhaps the forces placed at his disposal were insufficient ; but, however that may be, he refused. Villars was then asked to make the attempt, and, seeing that his fortune would be made if he succeeded, while he could not be seriously blamed for failure in an enterprise which Cattinat had thought beyond his strength, he accepted. But he took care to have a sufficient force, drawn partly from Flanders and partly from Cattinat's army, which was reduced to ten battalions and a few squadrons.

After some skilful manœuvring, Villars crossed the Rhine at Huningen, on the 14th of October ; and on the same day came in contact with the army of Prince Louis of Baden near Friedlingen. The two armies came hastily into action without having time to take up their ground properly ; the result was a singular battle, in which the cavalry and infantry on both sides fought quite independently of each other. Our cavalry broke that of the enemy and pursued them for a considerable distance ; in the meantime, our infantry had to attack the enemy's battalions posted on high and rough ground, and was repulsed in considerable disorder. All this took some time ; Villars saw the defeat of his infantry, and did not know what had become of his cavalry ; he lost his head and despaired of success. He was sitting under a tree, tearing his hair, when he saw Magnac, his senior Lieutenant-General, gallop up, accompanied by an aide-de-camp. He called out : " Well, Magnac, so we are defeated ! " Magnac, much astonished at finding Villars in such a state, said : " Why, what are you talking about ? and what are you doing there ? The enemy is beaten, and the day is ours ! " On hearing this, Villars jumped up and hastened with Magnac to the infantry, which was still keeping up the fight, led the battalions again to the attack, and finally the enemy gave way. Their losses were considerable ; seven guns were left on the field ; the Prince of Anspach, two Princes of Saxony, and the son of the Administrator of Wurtemberg were wounded and taken prisoners. The action was known as the battle of Friedlingen.

Magnac did not venture to tell his singular story at first, except to a few persons, in confidence ; but when he saw that Villars took all the credit for the victory, and received rewards, while he himself was neglected, he could not contain himself, and made a great noise, both in the army and at Court. Villars brazened it out, but, feeling that he wanted support, he secured that of Madame de Maintenon by a clever, courtier-like trick. The morning after the battle he had been reinforced by several cavalry regiments, one of which was commanded by the Count d'Ayen. Villars offered to send him to the King with the colours taken from the enemy, and he accepted, notwithstanding that Biron pointed out to him the absurdity of bearing the trophies of a battle at which he had not been present. But

anything was permissible to the nephew of Madame de Maintenon. His favour, however, did not prevent him from being the laughing-stock of the army; every letter written from it to Paris was full of Magnac's adventure, and jibes at the Count d'Ayen. But the letters arrived too late; everything had been settled.

On the 21st of October, Choiseul was despatched to Villars with a parcel for him from the King; and on the same day it was announced that he had been made a Marshal of France, by himself. The King wished to give him a pleasant surprise; the outside of the parcel bore the address "To the Marquis de Villars," but it contained a letter written by the King's own hand and addressed "To my cousin, the Marshal de Villars." Choiseul was in the secret, but was strictly forbidden to tell it even to his brother-in-law, when he gave him the parcel. Villars' joy may be imagined.

Cattinat was not so well pleased; his army had been so much reduced that he could do nothing; he obtained leave to return, and, travelling slowly, as if afraid to arrive, reached Paris and paid his respects to the King on the 17th of November. He met with a cold reception, remained only one day at Versailles, and then retired to his house at St. Gratien. He hardly ever left that retreat again; it would have been well for him if he had never left it; if he had been wise enough to resist the King's cajoleries and distrusted the results of an explanation all the more dangerous for him because it had proved him to be entirely in the right.

The army of Prince Louis of Baden had not been nearly so completely crushed as Villars represented; he soon appeared with a considerable force, and threatened to cross the Rhine. Our army recrossed that river, and went into winter-quarters; Villars was ordered to remain at Strasbourg in order to watch the frontier.

That child of fortune will henceforth play such a prominent part that it seems appropriate in this place to give a sketch of his character. I have mentioned his birth when speaking of his father; we have seen that it was not much of a foundation to build on; but his good fortune, which was unparalleled, made up throughout his long life for any deficiencies in that respect. In person he was above the middle height, and well-proportioned; as he advanced in life he

became stout, but never clumsy. He was dark-complexioned, with a lively, open, striking countenance. There was something in its expression which really had a touch of madness about it, and his bearing and gestures conveyed the same idea. His ambition was boundless, and he was not scrupulous as to the means he employed to gratify it ; he had a high opinion of himself, but the King was almost the only person who shared it. He was very gallant, and always contrived to throw an air of romance over his affairs of gallantry. Towards persons in a position to help him he was mean and cringing, while he himself never did a service to any one ; he was alike incapable of affection or gratitude. His courage was brilliant ; he was very active, very audacious ; with an effrontery which stopped at nothing and could carry off anything, and an excessive braggadocio which never left him. He had sufficient ability to impose on fools, supported as it was by his own self-confidence ; he expressed himself with ease, but he had a flux of words which became disgusting ; the more so because he was always talking of himself, boasting of how he had foreseen this or that, given advice, and carried things through successfully, without ever admitting, if he could help it, that any one else had contributed at all.

Under the magnificent extravagance of a Gascon he concealed a monstrous avarice and the avidity of a harpy ; he amassed piles of gold by pillage in time of war, and when he came to command armies he pillaged openly and shamelessly, making jokes about it himself. He was not ashamed to send out detachments for that express purpose, and had an eye to it when planning the movements of his army. He was incapable of looking after the details of supplies, convoys, and marches ; he left such things to any of his Generals who would take the trouble to see to them ; but he always contrived to take the credit to himself. Unless compelled by urgent necessity to pay attention to serious matters, he was always occupied with trifles ; his memory was stored with romances, comedies, and operas, of which he was always quoting scraps, even during the most serious conferences. He always haunted the theatres, and associated with the women to be found there, a practice which he carried on openly and indecently to the end of his days ; his old age was dishonoured by his shameful conversation.

His ignorance of public business, and, to speak plainly,

want of capacity, were inconceivable in a man who had been placed in such important positions, and for so long a time ; he used to lose his head and say exactly the contrary to what he meant to say. When I was associated with him in public affairs during the Regency I was often amazed at his blunders. I had frequently to put him right, and sometimes to explain his meaning myself. At that time he never let any business keep him from the theatre or the card-table ; he only thought of keeping his position of authority, and let others do his work. He was always fond of high play, because he was lucky at it and won great sums. Such a man could not be liked ; he never had a friend ; and no man ever filled such important offices who was less respected.

The renown which his inexhaustible good fortune acquired for him has often disgusted me with history ; a great many other people have made the same remark. His family were so imprudent as to publish, very soon after his death, some Memoirs which are unmistakably his ; it is only necessary to compare them with his despatch concerning the battle of Friedlingen. That report is confused and badly written ; he conceals, as far as he can, the repulse which nearly ruined his infantry and his ignorance concerning the cavalry action ; he mentions certain officers because he thought it advisable to do so ; but his praises, which specify no particular action, can flatter nobody. His Memoirs are in exactly the same confused style ; if they go more into detail it is because they abound in lies, and he makes himself the hero of everything. I was very young, and only a Colonel of cavalry, in 1694 and during the following campaigns ; but in the first I was son-in-law to the Commander-in-Chief, and in the following years I was on most confidential terms with Marshal de Choiseul, who succeeded my father-in-law in command. It was enough to make me see that the boasts contained in Villars' Memoirs have no foundation whatever so far as those campaigns are concerned, and I have heard from distinguished officers who served with him elsewhere that it is just the same with regard to others. In short, his Memoirs are full of lies ; most of the facts are distorted, and when there is any truth in his account of them he invariably adjusts it to suit his own praises.

As regards his negotiations in Bavaria and at Vienna which he depicts in such lively colours, I made inquiries of M. de Torcy to whom he reported everything at the time, as Minister

and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He told me that he admired his account of them as a romance, but that it was nothing but lies from beginning to end. M. de Torcy's truth and uprightness were never doubtful, and his memory was always clear and exact.

Villars' successes in war and at Court will no doubt gain for him a great name in history when sufficient time has elapsed for his personality to be forgotten, and when much of what was known to his contemporaries has passed out of memory. He will figure so often in these Memoirs that it will be easy to recognise the truth of this picture of him. The portrait is more to be trusted than the glory which he stole, and which, following the example of the King, he has transmitted to posterity; not indeed by medals or statues—he was too miserly—but by the pictures which cover the walls of his house. The most insignificant matters are represented in them; he is even depicted in the act of presiding over the Estates of Languedoc, at the time when he commanded the forces in that Province. I say nothing about his absurd jealousy, or about the travels of his wife when he used to drag her to the frontier. These are wretched trifles, to be passed over in silence; but the misfortune is that they had important results for the State, and influenced very important military operations, as Bavaria found to its cost.

But it would be unjust to deny that, with all these defects, he was a man of very considerable parts, and such as make a great commander. His strategical plans were bold, extensive, and nearly always sound; he was unequalled in the art of handling troops, either at a distance from the enemy, to conceal his designs and bring his combinations to bear at the right moment, or when in contact with the enemy, to carry out an attack. His tactical insight on the field of battle, though good, was not always equally correct; in action his head was clear, but he was liable to get into difficulties through impetuosity. Great inconvenience arose from the orders he gave; they were hardly ever in writing, and he made them vague and general, under the pretext of the confidence he felt in those who were to carry them out; they were expressed in bombastic phrases, and always in such a way that he took the credit if they were successful; in the event of failure he threw the blame on others.

After he arrived at the chief command of armies his

audacity was confined to words ; his personal valour was still the same, but his moral courage was quite changed. While a subordinate no affair was too hot for him ; he was always eager to distinguish himself. It was sometimes suspected that his plans were laid more with an eye to his personal interests than to the public service ; it was not so when he had to carry them out himself, but sometimes when the execution fell to others he was not sorry if success was doubtful. At Friedlingen he had everything to gain and little to lose ; if he succeeded he might hope for the Marshal's bâton ; if he failed, it was in an attempt which Cattinat had declined as hopeless. But when he had gained the coveted bâton the fire-cater became more cautious ; he feared a reverse of fortune, and more than once he was accused of missing what seemed to be unique and certain opportunities of gaining a success.

The fact is that, having arrived at the highest military rank, he was afraid of tempting fortune too far ; he had seen examples of it ; and he felt that he had other resources. Intrigue was not unknown to him ; he knew how to gain the King's favour by adoration, and to retain that of Madame de Maintenon by an unreserved surrender to her wishes ; he knew how to profit by the access to the King's private room which she had obtained for him ; he took care to keep on good terms with the confidential valets, and was clever in his dealings with the Ministers. This line of conduct seemed to him more profitable, as well as safer, than the risks and uncertainties of war.

This portrait of Villars may seem too long, yet I believe it contains no useless touches, and I have drawn it with scrupulous regard for truth. I cannot conclude it more fitly than by quoting a saying of his mother's at the time when he was in the full splendour of his new fortune. " My son," she said, " always talk of yourself to the King, but never to any one else." He profited to his advantage by the first part of this lesson, but not by the other ; he never ceased to deafen and weary people by incessant self-praise.

About the time of the battle of Friedlingen a great sorrow fell upon me ; my father-in-law died at the age of seventy-four. While in perfect health he was attacked by the stone, the symptoms of which were not recognised at first ; or rather, the hope that it might not be that disease caused them to be disregarded. During the last six months of his

life he could not leave his house ; but he was held in such general affection that the number of distinguished persons who flocked there made it like a little Court. When it was no longer possible to ignore the nature of his disease a certain Brother Jacques was selected to perform an operation, in preference to the regular surgeons. He was neither a monk nor a hermit, but wore an eccentric dress like a monk's gown ; he had invented a new method of operating for the stone, making the incision to one side of the usual place, which had the double advantage of making the operation shorter and avoiding certain unpleasant after-effects. Everything is ruled by fashion in France ; this man was so much in fashion at this time that no one else was talked of. His operations were watched for three months ; and, out of twenty patients, very few died.

During that time Marshal de Lorge was withdrawing himself from the world and preparing himself with great courage and Christian resignation. It was not any clinging to life on his own part which made him consent to an operation, so much as the wishes of his family and his desire to retain his office of Captain of the Body-guard for his son. The operation took place on the 19th of October ; Brother Jacques would have no advice nor assistance except Milet, surgeon-major to the Marshal's company of the Body-guard, who was much attached to him. A small stone was discovered, then some large growths adhering to the bladder, and underneath them a very large stone. A surgeon possessing any skill beyond mere manual dexterity would have been satisfied, for the time being, with extracting the small stone ; he would then have applied ointments to the growths to make them suppurate away, after which he would have extracted the large stone. Brother Jacques lost his head, and tore away the growths ; the operation lasted three-quarters of an hour and was so cruel that he dared not go on, but put off the extraction of the second stone.

The Marshal bore it with tranquil courage. Soon afterwards Madame de Lorge came in, he held out his hand to her and said : " Well, I am in the condition people wished me to come to," and when she replied in a hopeful way, he added, " Let it be as God pleases." All his family and a few friends were in the house, and dreaded the results of such an extraordinary operation. The Duke de Grammont, who had recently been operated upon by Maréchal, came

and begged that Maréchal or some other surgeon should be called in ; but Brother Jacques would not hear of it, and the Maréchal would not insist for fear of disturbing his presence of mind. At last Brother Jacques himself asked for assistance ; it was instantly supplied ; but it was useless. Marshal de Lorge died on the 22nd of October, the Abbé Anselme, a famous preacher, his director, having been in constant attendance on him.

The household presented a terrible scene ; never was a man more deeply and generally regretted, nor one who better deserved it. I was deeply grieved myself, and I had to support and console Madame de Saint-Simon. I thought more than once that I should lose her ; she and her father were devoted to each other ; no two persons could be more alike than they were in mind and disposition. He loved me as if I had really been his son, and I loved and respected him as the best of fathers ; there was a thorough and delightful confidence between us.

Marshal de Lorge was a younger son, the third out of a numerous family ; he lost his father when only five years old, and began soldiering at fourteen. M. de Turenne, his mother's brother, took care of him like a father ; the nephew returned his uncle's affection ; they always lived together, and appeared to the world like father and son. Owing to some family engagement, M. de Lorge was drawn into the party of M. le Prince ; he even followed him into the Low Countries and served under him as Lieutenant-General with great distinction. Under M. le Prince he perfected himself in the military art, which he had already studied under M. de Turenne ; he afterwards returned to his uncle, who took a delight in teaching him to command armies, and instructed him by employing him in his own on all the most important and difficult undertakings.

M. de Lorge was young, handsome, and gallant ; he lived in the best society, nevertheless he had serious thoughts. He had been bred a Protestant, and was related to their greatest leaders ; for half his life he followed the rules of their religion without thinking that they might be in error ; but at last he began to have doubts. The prejudices of his early education held him back. He was still under the influence of his mother and M. de Turenne, who were strong Protestants ; he was also a great friend of the Duchess de Rohan, the leading spirit of the party, and her celebrated

daughters ; moreover, his love for his sister, the Countess de Roye, who was devoted to her religion, restrained him even more strongly. But in the midst of these spiritual conflicts he wished for light. He found great assistance in a man of no great mark, a friend of his, who had become a Catholic. Still, he wished to inquire for himself, since he had already reached the point of distrusting all that he had believed hitherto.

He resolved to submit his doubts to the famous Bossuet, afterwards Bishop of Meaux, and to M. Claude, Minister of Charenton, a man highly respected by the Protestants. He consulted them separately, without telling them, and showed each the replies of the other as if they were his own. In this way he spent a whole year, during which he withdrew from society, so that M. de Turenne and his friends became uneasy about him. His good faith and sincere wish for instruction deserved a ray of enlightenment. M. de Meaux proved the antiquity of the practice of praying for the dead, and showed how St. Augustine had prayed for his mother, St. Monica. M. Claude could give no satisfactory reply ; he evaded the difficulty by subterfuges which shocked the simple honesty of the proselyte. M. de Lorge then informed the Bishop and the minister of the communication he had been keeping up with them without their knowledge, and induced them to meet for a discussion. The arguments of Bossuet convinced his intellect, and he noticed some not very straightforward evasions on the part of M. Claude, which he could not explain away at a subsequent interview.

His mind was now made up, but consideration for his relations still held him back. He felt that he was about to plunge a dagger into the hearts of the three persons who were dearest to him, his mother, his sister, and M. de Turenne, to whom he owed everything. He began by speaking to the latter : M. de Turenne listened to him patiently ; then told him that he was delighted, that he had come to the same determination himself after studying under the same prelate. It is impossible to describe the astonishment and joy of M. de Lorge ; the Bishop of Meaux had faithfully kept the secret of both M. de Turenne and M. de Lorge. Soon afterwards the conversion of M. de Turenne was announced. M. de Lorge delayed his own out of delicacy ; he did not announce it for some months, fearing lest the world might think that he had been carried away by the example of his benefactor.

During the remainder of his life he always looked back to his conversion as the source of his greatest happiness. He became more friendly than ever with M. Cotton, who had been the original cause of it, and always looked up to M. de Meaux with veneration and gratitude. He abhorred any compulsion in religious matters, but always endeavoured zealously to convert any Protestants to whom he had a chance of talking. To the end of his days he was regular and even religious in his conduct, and a friend to all good men. To his great grief, his conversion nearly killed his sister, Madame de Roye; religion was the only thing they loved better than each other. She would only see him afterwards on the condition, which was faithfully observed, that the subject should never be mentioned between them.

The high position of M. de Lorge in the esteem of M. le Prince and M. de Turenne, and his own merits, procured for him the highest commands, next to the Marshals of France, during the war with Holland. I am not exaggerating when I say that all Europe admired the combat of Altenheim and the skilful retreat which followed it, even at the moment when it was ringing with the news of the death of M. de Turenne. It is a fact well attested by all the memoirs and letters of that period. M. le Prince was good enough to exalt M. de Lorge's skill still higher. As he was leaving the army of Flanders, which he commanded, in order to replace M. de Turenne, he said: "I may admit that I have some victories to my credit, but I say sincerely that I would give several of them to have done what M. de Lorge has just done at Altenheim." After such a testimony anything that I could say of the action of Altenheim would be weak, yet if I leave the General aside I cannot refrain from saying a word concerning M. de Lorge as a man, and as a great man, whom the Romans would have admired. M. de Turenne had been killed by a cannon-ball, the army was discouraged by his loss; any man who succeeded to the command might have been confounded by his sudden responsibility, and that man was M. de Lorge, the favourite nephew of the late commander, who lost everything by his death, who had no patrimony, and saw himself henceforth in the power of M. de Louvois, the declared enemy of M. de Turenne. The man who did not feel his spirit cast down under such circumstances must have been no ordinary man.

Though covered with glory, M. de Lorge had the mortifica-

tion of seeing several Marshals of France appointed a few days later, while he was passed over. He was consoled by the general outcry of the army against such an injustice ; and none of the new Marshals who accompanied M. le Prince when he took over the command ventured to assume any superiority over him. The outcry was such that M. de Louvois became uneasy. The post of Commander-in-Chief in Alsace, worth more than 50,000 livres a year, was vacant through the death of Vaubrun, who was killed at Altenheim. Louvois did not doubt that it would be to the taste of a man who had nothing of his own, and offered it to M. de Lorge ; he was much surprised when his courier brought back the curt reply that a post which was good enough for a *cadet* of Nogent was not good enough for a *cadet* of Duras. In refusing M. de Lorge had made up his mind to live in retirement. The campaign, however, was prolonged till the autumn, and when he returned he was received as his glory and misfortunes deserved. M. de la Rochefoucauld, his intimate friend, took the opportunity to speak so strongly in his favour that, in spite of Louvois, M. de Lorge was made a Marshal of France, by himself, amid general applause.

Then he had to change his plans for the future. His new rank gave him an income of 12,000 livres, but that was absolutely all he had. He was appointed to one of the chief commands in the army of Flanders, with which the King intended to take the field in person. This entailed considerable and unavoidable expense ; to provide for it he made up his mind to marry. His marriage was very unsuitable to his birth, but he found a wife who had eyes only for him, in spite of the difference between their ages ; she felt how much she was honoured by the high birth and great merit of her husband, and repaid him by spotless fidelity and the most tender affection.

Soon after his marriage one of the Captaincies of the Bodyguard became vacant, and it was offered to Marshal de Lorge, although his brother, M. de Duras, was already one of the Captains. So it happened, singularly enough, that the two brothers, both Marshals of France, were also both Captains of the Bodyguard. But for M. de Lorge's marriage he would not have been able to purchase the appointment.

It was not offered to him on account of any subserviency on his part. Early in this campaign the King's army was covering the siege of Bouchain, and advanced as far as

Harrebise, where the Prince of Orange was encamped. The King's forces were superior in numbers ; nothing separated the two armies ; it seemed as if a resolute attack must give the King an important victory. The night was spent in order of battle ; next morning M. de Louvois induced the King to hold a council of war on horseback with his Marshals. M. de Louvois explained the subject of their deliberations, and gave his opinion in favour of remaining quiet and not attacking. He knew what he was about, and had already made sure of Marshals de Bellefonds, d'Humières, and La Feuillade. Marshal de Lorge expressed himself strongly in favour of an attack, and the others could not refute his arguments ; but they looked at Louvois and persisted in their former opinion. M. de Lorge remonstrated forcibly ; the end of it was, however, that the King commended his zeal, but said that, although with great reluctance, he must yield to the opinion of the majority. So he remained there without attempting anything, and in the meantime the Prince of Orange was strongly reinforced.

For some reason or other, an officer was sent into the enemy's camp with a flag of truce. He returned next day, and reported to the King that the Prince of Orange had told him that he had never had such an escape ; that if he had been attacked he must have been beaten, giving his reasons for saying so. Apparently in order to show how well informed he was, the Prince of Orange sent a message to M. de Lorge to tell him that he knew what his advice had been and the reasons he had given for it, and that it was fortunate for himself that it was not taken. The officer was so imprudent as to tell this story to the King in the presence of M. de Louvois and many Generals and other officers. He afterwards told it to Marshal de Lorge, who tried to keep him quiet ; but it was too late ; in an hour or so nothing else was talked about in the army. Immediately afterwards Bouchain was taken, and the King left his army to the Generals and returned with Louvois to Versailles.

In 1688 Marshal de Lorge was made a Knight of the Order, and in the same year was given the command of the army of the Rhine. Prince Louis of Baden, who commanded the army opposed to him, had a great esteem for him. On one occasion a courier, carrying letters to the Court, was taken by the enemy ; Prince Louis sent one letter back to Marshal de Lorge, after having read it, and

on the outside he wrote : "*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*" (Let the cobbler stick to his last.) The Marshal, surprised at this curious superscription, asked the messenger whether he brought nothing else ; but the man said his orders were merely to deliver the packet into the Marshal's own hands. He opened it, and found it was a letter written by La Fonds, Intendant of his army, a man who owed all his advancement to the Marshal and his brother, M. de Duras, in which he made severe criticisms on the campaign, gave his opinion as to what ought to be done, and set himself up as a much better general than M. de Lorge. Then the Marshal understood what Prince Louis meant, and thanked him accordingly. He sent on La Fonds' letter, with the comments which it deserved, and had him recalled in disgrace.

I could relate many more anecdotes of my father-in-law, but it would make this digression too long ; I could not refrain from it altogether. There never was a man more honest, more simple, or more obliging. He was truth and openness personified ; very good-tempered ; he never bore malice, and was always ready to forgive. His wit was not brilliant ; he did not care for brilliancy ; and his manner of expressing himself was not attractive. As regards the military art, his plans were bold, well-concerted, and intelligible ; he was very skilful in handling troops, without ever fatiguing them unnecessarily ; he knew how to choose his positions so as to place his army in security, and paid great attention to the commissariat. With him in command there were no superfluous guards, no useless marches and counter-marches, no confused orders ; he knew how to take precautions without tiring his men ; they were always in good condition at the end of his campaigns. He was more eager for the glory of others than for his own ; he always gave praise when it was deserved, and concealed other people's mistakes with paternal kindness. He was adored by his Generals and officers, and also by his company of the Body-guard. But what is very rare, he was no less beloved at Court, where everybody is jealous and selfish ; he had not an enemy there, except M. de Louvois ; and he was his enemy only because he was the favourite nephew of M. de Turenne. Nothing could equal his kindness and affection for his own family ; he treated his nephews exactly as if they were his children. He had many real friends of both sexes ; he valued friendship because he was capable

of it himself. But he never spared a rascal ; he was always a terror to them.

With all his simplicity and modesty he knew how to preserve his dignity, and was always treated with respect and consideration. Even the King, though he liked him, was cautious how he treated him ; the Marshal always told him straight out anything which he thought he ought to know, and his character for truth was such that the King always believed him. Though he always treated the King with due respect, he was extremely bold in demanding justice for those who had incurred his displeasure ; he would take their part in the face of prejudices which would have daunted the greatest favourites, and more than once he induced the King to change his mind against his will. In the days of his poverty, as afterwards when in command of armies, he was thoroughly disinterested ; he never would dirty his hands by making money out of "protections" ¹ when in an enemy's country, as most Generals thought themselves entitled to do ; it was a lesson, he said, which he had learnt from M. de Turenne. There never was a man so amiable in all his ways ; so consistent ; so trustworthy ; so glad to make others happy, or with such polite gaiety ; there never was one whose loss was so generally, so bitterly, and so long deplored.

¹ A "protection" (*sauvegarde*) was a soldier placed by the General commanding, in a house belonging to an enemy, with a written order to preserve it from pillage. The proprietors used to pay handsomely for this protection, and a greedy General could make a good deal of money by granting it. *Sauvegardes* were not recognised at a distance of more than six hours' march from the main body.

CHAPTER V

1702

Death of the Duchess de Gesvres—Her character—Evenings at Trianon—Characters of the Prince and Princess d'Harcourt—A Harpy and a cheat—Practical jokes—The servants' revenge—Marshal de Villeroy appointed to command in Flanders—Death of the Chevalier de Lorraine—Orry—Licences to print religious works—My brother-in-law marries Chamillart's daughter—I become intimate with Chamillart—My sources of information.

THE Duchess de Gesvres died about the same time, separated from her husband, who had spent millions of her money and was the tormentor of his whole family. She was tall and thin, walked like a stork, and looked like an old witch. She came to Court occasionally, where she was a singular figure, and looked as if she was half-starved ; but she was a good woman, with much wit and dignity. I remember that one summer there was a great supper at Trianon for the Princesses ; the King often used to go there in the evenings at that time, and allowed all men and ladies belonging to the Court to follow him without special invitations. The Duchess de Gesvres took it into her head to go. Her age, dress, and appearance caused the Princesses to make fun of her with their favourites ; she perceived it, and without the least embarrassment gave them a piece of her mind in such plain language that they looked ashamed of themselves and held their tongues. That was not all ; after supper she spoke of them so freely and wittily that they were frightened, and sent to beg her pardon. She was good enough to grant it, but sent them word that it was only on condition that they learnt manners ; and they never dared to look her in the face again.

Nothing could be so magnificent as these evenings at Trianon. The flowers in the beds were changed every day ; and I have seen the King and the whole Court driven away by the scent of tuberoses ; it was so strong that no one

could stand it, though the garden is of immense extent and situated on a branch of the canal.

The Prince d'Harcourt, after an absence of seventeen years, at last obtained permission to pay his respects to the King. He had followed the King during his conquests of the Low Countries and Franche-Comté, but had been little at Court since his journey to Spain, whither he had escorted Monsieur's daughter when she married Charles II. He afterwards took service with the Venetians, distinguished himself in the Morea, and only returned when the republic made peace with the Turks. He was a tall, handsome man, with a noble and intelligent expression, who nevertheless looked just like a country actor. He was a great liar, a libertine and a freethinker, a spendthrift and an impudent cheat ; his taste for low debauchery kept him in obscurity all his life. After his return, finding that the Court and Paris were not to his taste, and being unable to live with his wife (in which he was not far wrong) he established himself at Lyons, where he had plenty of wine, mistresses picked up in the streets, with society to match, and a pack of hounds. He also kept a gaming-table which enabled him to live at the expense of dupes and fools, sons of rich merchants whom he enticed into his net. In this way he passed many years ; at last he got tired of it and returned to Paris. The King, who despised him, would not see him ; it was not till after two months of entreaties that he was allowed to pay his respects.

His wife was a favourite of Madame de Maintenon, for a powerful though impure reason which we have already noticed ; she accompanied the Court wherever it went, but she could not obtain permission for her husband to go to Marly, though as a rule when ladies went there their husbands went as a matter of course, without being invited. She refrained from going there herself, hoping that Madame de Maintenon would miss her society sufficiently to make her ask the husband as well. But she was mistaken ; though Madame de Maintenon made a point of protecting her in everything, she was often rather bothered by her, and got on very well in her absence. The Princess was afraid that Madame de Maintenon would learn to do without her altogether, so she went back to Marly. The King, however, still refused positively to have the Prince d'Harcourt there ; that disgusted him with court life, and he went off at last to live in Lorraine.

I may as well give a description of this Princess d'Harcourt, for it will throw some light on a Court at which such a personage could be welcomed. She had been very handsome and gallant, but though she was not old her beauty had run to seed. At this time she was a tall, fat woman, always on the move, with a complexion the colour of milk-soup, ugly thick lips, and tow-coloured hair, which was always coming down, and untidy, like her clothes. She was dirty in her person; always intriguing and pushing; perpetually quarrelling, and alternately haughty and cringing, according to the person she had to deal with. She was a fair-haired Fury, and, what is more, she was a Harpy. She had all the impudence, the malignity, and the deceit of the Harpies; she had their avarice and eagerness for gain; she had their gluttony, and, like them, she was very prompt in relieving herself after a gorge. She was the despair of people with whom she dined, for very often, on rising from table, she had not time to get to the door, but left a filthy trail behind her on the floor; the servants of Madame du Maine and the Grand Equerry often wished her at the devil. She was not in the least embarrassed on these occasions; she pulled up her petticoats and retired; after a time she came back, saying that she had been taken ill. People were accustomed to her ways.

She was always speculating, and doing commissions for money; she would give herself as much trouble to make 100 francs as 100,000; the Controllers-General could hardly get rid of her; and whenever she could, she would cheat men of business who had dealings with her, in order to get more out of them. Her impudence in cheating at cards was wonderful; she did it openly. When she was caught she begged pardon, but pocketed the money. It was always the same thing; but she came to be regarded as a person with whom it was undignified to quarrel. She used to cheat at lansquenet, even in the saloon at Marly, in the presence of the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy. At other games, such as ombre, people avoided playing with her; but it was not always possible. When the game was over she always said that, if people liked, she would give up anything which she had won not quite fairly, but she pocketed it all the same, without waiting for an answer. She said so, because she made a great profession of piety, and thought in this way she could set her conscience at rest; for at cards, she said,

there were always some mistakes. She attended all religious services, and frequently received the Holy Communion, very often after gambling till four in the morning.

One day at Fontainebleau she went to call on the Maréchale de Villeroy ; it happened to be one of the great festivals of the Church, and she called between vespers and the *salut*. The Maréchale maliciously proposed to her to play cards, in order to make her miss the *salut* ; she refused, saying that Madame de Maintenon would be at the service. The Maréchale insisted ; she said it was absurd to suppose that Madame de Maintenon could notice who was in chapel and who was not ; and finally they sat down to play with four or five others. After the service was over Madame de Maintenon, who hardly ever went to see anybody, took it into her head, as she was passing the apartments of the Maréchale de Villeroy, to go in and see her. The Princess d'Harcourt was thunderstruck when she was announced. "I am lost," she cried at the top of her voice ; "she will see me at cards instead of being at Church !" She let her cards drop, and fell back in her arm-chair in despair, while the Maréchale laughed heartily.

Madame de Maintenon came slowly into the room ; the Maréchale told her that, though she was doing her a great honour, she was causing a good deal of confusion, and pointed to the Princess d'Harcourt. Madame de Maintenon smiled, with an air of majestic kindness, and said to the Princess : "So that is the way you attend divine service to-day, Madame !" At these words the Princess of Harcourt started furiously out of her sort of swoon, and cried out that people were always playing tricks on her, that the Maréchale had persecuted her into playing to make her miss the service, knowing quite well that Madame de Maintenon was coming. "Persecuted !" said the Maréchale. "I thought I could not please you better than by asking you to play ; it is true that, for a moment, you were afraid that your absence from the service would be noticed ; but your inclination soon prevailed. That is all my crime, Madame," she added, addressing Madame de Maintenon ; and everybody laughed. To put an end to the quarrel, Madame de Maintenon begged them to go on playing ; but the Princess was muttering to herself all the time ; she did not know what she was doing, and made one mistake after another. It was a farce which

amused the Court for some days ; for this lovely Princess was equally feared, hated, and despised.

The Duke and Duchess of Burgundy were always playing practical jokes on her. One evening they had arranged a number of squibs all along the walk which leads from the *château* of Marly to the building where she lived, and two chairmen, who had their orders, were in readiness to carry her home when she wished to go. When they had got half-way down the walk, the squibs began to go off ; the chairmen set her chair down, and ran away, leaving her struggling inside and shrieking like a demon. All the company were watching the adventure from the door of the saloon, and ran up to have a nearer view of her, headed by the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy. Another time the Duke fixed a squib under the chair in which she was sitting, playing piquet ; but, just as he was going to set a light to it, some charitable person warned him that it might maim her, and he desisted.

Another time, also at Marly, there had been a heavy fall of snow, and it was freezing hard. The Duchess of Burgundy and her suite armed themselves with a quantity of snow-balls, slipped quietly into the Princess's room when she was in bed, drew back her curtains suddenly, and overwhelmed her with a shower of snow-balls. The sight of this dirty creature in bed, suddenly awakened, dishevelled, shrieking at the top of her voice, and wriggling like an eel, amused them for nearly half an hour ; but it was almost enough to kill her. Next day she sulked, and was laughed at all the more.

She had fits of the sulks sometimes, when the jokes had gone a little too far, or when the Grand Equerry had been scolding her. He thought, very properly, that a person bearing the name of Lorraine ought not to allow herself to be treated like a buffoon ; and, as he was very blunt, he sometimes said extremely harsh things to her, at dinner, and before other people ; then she would begin to cry, and afterwards be angry and sulk. Then the Duchess of Burgundy would pretend to sulk too, and the Princess never could hold out ; she used, in a very short time, to come cringing and complaining that the Duchess was unkind to her ; she would cry and beg pardon for her bad temper, and ask them to amuse themselves with her as before. Then the Duchess would relent ; but it was only to begin teasing her more than ever, for the Duchess of Burgundy could do

nothing wrong in the eyes of the King and Madame de Maintenon, so the Princess d'Harcourt had no allies. She could not even quarrel with any of the ladies who helped the Duchess in her practical jokes ; though as a rule it was very unwise to offend her.

She would not pay her servants their wages, or paid very irregularly ; so, one day, they conspired together, and her carriage stopped on the Pont-Neuf. The coachman and footmen got down and gave her some plain speaking at the carriage-window ; her equerry and ladies'-maid, who were inside, alighted, and they all went off together, leaving her to get out of her difficulty as best she could. She began haranguing the mob which gathered round her, and was very lucky to find a hackney-coachman who mounted the box and drove her home. Another time, Madame de Saint-Simon, driving back from Mass, saw her in the street at Versailles, on foot, in full dress, carrying her train over her arm. Madame de Saint-Simon stopped and offered assistance ; the servants had played her the same trick again, and moreover, while her coachman and footmen left her in the street, all those in the house had deserted in a body.

She was always changing her servants ; she used to beat them, for she was very strong and had a violent temper. On one occasion she had engaged a new ladies'-maid, who was also very strong and robust, to whom she administered sundry thumps and boxes on the ear. The maid said nothing, but, as there were no wages due to her, she quietly sent her things out of the house and told the other servants what she was going to do. Next morning, when she was alone with the Princess, she made some pert answer, and when her mistress, as she expected, boxed her ears, she sprang at her, threw her down on the floor, and beat her till she was tired ; then, leaving the Princess howling on the ground, bruised from head to foot, she locked her into her room and left the house. Such was this favourite of Madame de Maintenon. I must now return to more serious matters.

Marshal de Villeroy, having regained his liberty, arrived at Versailles on the 14th of November. Nothing could exceed the King's kindness to him ; he even went so far as to talk over the affairs of State with him, and told Torcy to show him some of his despatches. His friend the Chevalier de Lorraine, who was very clever, and had a thorough know-

ledge of the King and the ways of the Court, advised the Marshal to give up commanding armies, in which he had not been fortunate, and to take advantage of the singular favour shown him in order to obtain a seat in the Council. The Chevalier was a man of great foresight, and no doubt would have been glad to have a friend in the Council who was accustomed to have no secrets from him and to be guided by him in everything ; he did his best to persuade the Marshal that admittance to it would establish his fortune on a solid foundation, and would be an honour which had not been conferred on a man of the sword throughout the King's reign, with the single exception of M. de Beauvilliers. The Marshal acknowledged the force of these arguments, and admitted that, after what had passed between the King and himself, he might venture to think that a seat in the Council was a favour not out of his reach ; but he said that he would be dishonoured if he retired from active service after the misfortune which had happened to him. Like most people of little ability who think they have a great deal, he was very obstinate ; and the Chevalier de Lorraine could not prevail on him to change his mind. It was not long before the Marshal had reason to regret that he had not taken such wholesome advice. A few days later he was declared Commander-in-Chief of the army in Flanders.

The Chevalier de Lorraine did not live to see the unfortunate consequences of the appointment. He had had a slight attack of apoplexy while the Court was at Fontainebleau, but had not altered his usual mode of life. While playing at ombre in his rooms at the Palais-Royal on the 7th of December he had a second stroke and lost consciousness ; he died two days later, not having completed his sixtieth year. He was not much regretted, except by Mademoiselle de Lislebonne, to whom it was believed that he had long been secretly married. I have said enough about him elsewhere, and have nothing to add now.

About this time the King allowed the Count d'Albert to be released from the Conciergerie, where he had been imprisoned for more than two years on account of a duel ; but he was not restored to his military rank. Pertuis and the Marquis de Conflans, who had been in prison for nine years, also for duelling, were released at the same time.

In order to secure Lorraine our troops occupied Nancy, to the great displeasure of the Duke and Duchess of Lorraine.

They went to reside at Lunéville, and never returned to Nancy.

On Monday, the 4th of December, the King told the Duke of Burgundy that he gave him leave in future to attend the meetings of the Council of Despatches, and even of the Council of State ; for the present he expected him to listen without expressing his own opinions, in order to gain experience ; but later on he should be glad to see him take part in everything. The young Prince was much gratified by this honour, which he had not expected, for Monseigneur was much older when he was admitted to the Councils. Madame de Maintenon had used her influence to procure it for him, out of love for the Duchess of Burgundy ; and the Duke de Beauvilliers had borne witness to his ripeness and industry. The Duchess of Burgundy appeared overwhelmed with joy, and M. de Beauvilliers also was delighted.

Orry was sent back to Spain about this time. He was a man sprung from the dregs of the people, very clever, slightly deaf ; he had turned his hand to all sorts of trades, at first to get a living, and afterwards to make money. He began as an exciseman ; later on he managed the affairs of the Duchess of Portsmouth,¹ who found him out in some roguery and dismissed him. Having returned to his first occupation he made the acquaintance of some great financiers, who gave him sundry commissions to do for them ; he performed them to their satisfaction, and in this way came under the notice of Chamillart. Our Government was anxious to obtain more certain information regarding the finances of Spain ; it was desirable to send an obscure man who would not alarm the persons responsible for them, yet sufficiently insinuating to obtain the necessary information, and with sufficient intelligence to understand and explain it. Orry was proposed and appointed. He had lately returned from Spain to report on what he had discovered. He brought strong recommendations from Madame des Ursins : she had captivated the affections of the Queen, who was acting as Regent during her husband's absence ; her design was to make the Queen take an active part in all public affairs, and by this means to govern them herself. Orry paid court to her ; she was pleased with his cleverness, and found him obsequious and ready to help

¹ Louise de la K rouaille, formerly mistress to Charles II. She returned to France after that King's death.

her in her enterprises. She pushed him on in the Finance Department in order to get her own finger in, in a way which might turn out useful ; and they struck up an alliance on the footing of mistress and valet. Chamillart, delighted to find that his choice had been approved of, backed him up with all his influence ; and he was sent back with official commissions which gave him a better standing. We shall see him before long develop rapidly into a leading personage.

For some time there had been a smouldering quarrel between the Chancellor and the Bishops ; quite at the end of this year a fresh dispute with the Bishop of Chartres caused it to break out into a flame. The Bishops had the right to print their ordinary charges on diocesan affairs, and such things as service-books and children's catechisms, on their own authority, without having to ask permission ; they wished to take advantage of the King's zeal against Jansenism and Quietism to extend this right to printing doctrinal works of a much wider scope. The Chancellor would not allow their pretensions, and long disputes went on. The Bishops alleged that, being judges of the Faith, their works on doctrine could not be reviewed or corrected by any one, and consequently they required no permission to print them. The Chancellor upheld his ancient privileges, and said that, while he arrogated no claim to express opinions on doctrinal matters, it was his duty to see that disputes on such subjects were not made a pretext for disturbing the State ; to guard against a restoration of the ancient domination of the Bishops, which had wisely been curtailed and brought within reasonable bounds ; and, finally, to examine these books to see that nothing was slipped into them prejudicial to the liberties of the Gallican Church.

The dispute was brought to a head by the publication of a translation of the New Testament, with critical notes, by M. Simon, a restless *savant*. Cardinal de Noailles and the Bishop of Meaux condemned it in their pastoral charges ; M. Simon remonstrated ; the Bishops of Meaux and Chartres wrote replies to him, and it was these writings which they wished to withdraw from the inspection and authority of the Chancellor. The quarrel became heated. Madame de Maintenon had been dissatisfied with the Chancellor for a long time, and she was altogether guided by the Bishop of Chartres ; she therefore declared herself on the side of the

Bishops. The Jesuits were always urging on Father de la Chaise against the Chancellor, whom they regarded as their enemy because he liked order in everything, and was always on his guard against the encroachments of Rome ; they lost no opportunity of depicting him to the King in the odious colours of a Jansenist.

The King was in great perplexity ; he could have decided the matter with a single word, but he was afraid of annoying the Jesuits and putting Madame de Maintenon in a bad temper. He therefore begged the contending parties to try and arrange matters amicably, and finally a compromise was arrived at. It was declared that the Bishops abandoned their claim to be the sole authorities for licensing the publication of works on religion, but that they had a right to censure them, and also to print such religious books as they might write themselves. As regarded the books written against M. Simon, some things contained in them, which the Chancellor did not approve, were altered.

The quarrel ended in this way for the present, but the Jesuits and Madame de Maintenon bore malice, and the Chancellor was not altogether pleased. Another dispute arose soon afterwards on the question of the religious books composed by the Bishops, which they were allowed to print. They made out that this expression covered all doctrinal questions ; the Chancellor maintained that it only meant prayer-books, missals, rituals, and such-like. The point was never decided ; but the Chancellor upheld his authority in practice, and allowed nothing to be printed without being examined and licensed in the ordinary way. The dispute died out, for the Bishop of Meaux was growing old, and was, besides, no enemy to the Chancellor ; the Bishop of Chartres was too much occupied with St. Cyr and other matters to take an active part ; and few, if any, of the other Bishops had written books, and consequently they were not interested.

But one lasting consequence of this affair was that the Chancellor was on worse terms than ever with Madame de Maintenon, and that she, in combination with the Jesuits, turned the King against him, though he never lost his esteem and a certain personal regard for him. The Chancellor was easily discouraged, and his disgust at the growing coldness of the King prevented him from trying to regain his confidence, which he might easily have done if he would

have given himself the trouble, as will appear on several occasions in the sequel.

The year ended with the marriage of my brother-in-law, the Duke de Quintin, to Chamillart's third daughter. There had been rumours of it during the summer, so that I asked the Maréchale de Lorge what I ought to say when people put questions to me, and she assured me there was no foundation for the report. Thereupon I thought I might, and ought to, speak openly to her. I told her the match seemed very undesirable as regarded family connections; there was not sufficient wealth to make up for other drawbacks, and I did not see that it could lead to any advancement through Chamillart's favour, because he already had one son-in-law, La Feuillade, about whom he was crazy, and anything he could do would be for him. I added that a daughter of the Duke d'Harcourt would be much more suitable with regard to birth; that Harcourt was in high favour, and, as his children were all young, he would be able to do something for his son-in-law. Madame de Lorge did not seem to like the idea, and I dropped the subject.

Owing to the approaching operation on the Marshal, M. de Lausun had not been able to avoid a reconciliation with the Maréchale, and people were surprised to see that, in spite of all that had passed, he took her to his house after our common loss, and she stayed there some days. It occurred to him that he might turn the proposed marriage to good account for himself. He thought he might conciliate the all-powerful Minister by advocating the claims of his daughter, that the connection would be a passport to his good-will, and that by his influence he might regain the favour of the King. The Maréchale was well inclined to listen to his arguments, and he had no difficulty in persuading the young man; he made him believe that if he married Chamillart's daughter everything he touched would turn to gold.

The whole thing was arranged without Madame de Saint-Simon or myself knowing anything about it, except from common report. I spoke to the Maréchale on the subject; as she only admitted that the arrangements were in an advanced stage, I could not help telling her once more what I thought of it. I added that, so far as I was concerned, nothing would suit me better than this marriage, but for many reasons I feared lest she and her son should regret it.

Then she spoke more openly, and I saw so clearly that the thing was settled that I thought I ought to go and congratulate Chamillart next day. The reason why I was in such a hurry to do so was that, after I spoke to the Maréchale on the subject for the first time, during the summer, Madame de Noailles had warned me not to show my dislike to the marriage too plainly, because it would certainly come off, and everything I said was reported to the Chamillart family.

So I went to call on Chamillart ; I did not know him at all, except as one knows official people, and had only spoken to him on the rare occasions when I had to transact some business with him. He was at work with the Directors of Finance, but left them at once, and gave me a most gracious reception. I confined myself to the ordinary compliments, but the Minister began at once to tell me all about the negotiations for the marriage, and to complain of the manner in which he had been treated by the Maréchale de Lorge. He spoke so openly that I could not help replying with the same frankness. He told me that the pension of 20,000 livres, which the Duke de Quintin had received at his father's death, had been granted solely on the understanding that the marriage should take place, and he showed me a letter from the Maréchale which he had read to the King ; it contained expressions which made me blush. I do not suppose there ever was a first conversation so full of reciprocal confidence between men of such different ages and positions, and so little known to each other, as Chamillart and myself. It was the more surprising because, as will be seen presently, he was fully informed of my dislike to the marriage. He also told me that my mother-in-law was raising all sorts of questions respecting my wife's interests, and that she was not satisfied with what we offered. The end of it was that she refused to carry out any of the obligations imposed upon widows by the law, and her manner of doing so was, if possible, even stranger than the refusal itself. These family matters may seem out of place, but it will be seen later on that it is necessary to mention them.

On Wednesday, the 13th of December, we went to L'Étang, where the Bishop of Senlis married my brother-in-law to his niece. The bride's dowry was only 100,000 crowns, the same as that of her sister, the Duchess de la Feuillade ; and, like her, she and her husband had free quarters every-

where, which gave me the use of Marshal de Lorge's apartments in the *château* of Versailles. The wedding-party was magnificent and well attended. The Minister and his family were delighted ; nothing could exceed the cordiality shown to Madame de Saint-Simon and myself by Chamillart, his wife, and his daughters, and even by their private friends. If I had been astonished at his frankness during our first interview I was still more so at the manner in which he now asked me to give him my friendship ; he expressed himself most energetically, and with the utmost politeness ; I could see that he was thoroughly sincere. I was rather embarrassed, and he saw it ; but I treated him as I had treated the Chancellor on a similar occasion. I told him of my intimate friendship with the Chancellor, and my connection with his son, of the close affection between Madame de Saint-Simon and Madame de Pontchartrain, who were more like sisters than cousins ; and I said that if, knowing these things, he still wished for my friendship, I would give it him with all my heart. He was touched by my frankness, and said it made him still more desirous of my friendship ; we promised it to each other, and we kept our promise faithfully and affectionately till his death.

He was at daggers drawn with the Chancellor and his son ; I thought it right, therefore, on leaving L'Étang, to go and tell them what had passed between Chamillart and myself. The Chancellor received me just as M. de Beauvilliers had done with respect to himself ; his wife and daughter-in-law did the same, and his son did as much as could be expected from him. Both parties had always so much consideration for my feelings that they never alluded to each other before me if any one else was present ; in private they did not put so much constraint upon themselves, for they knew they could trust me, and they were not mistaken. In this way I became an intimate friend of Chamillart, as I was already of the Chancellor and the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers ; and I was on as good terms with Pontchartrain as any one could be with him. These intimacies let me into the secret of many important matters, and procured me an amount of consideration in the Court far beyond that of most men of my age.

Chamillart was not long in giving me proofs of his friendship ; without my knowing it he tried to reconcile the

King to me, and, though he did not succeed, I was none the less grateful. I was speaking of it to his wife one day, when she assumed a more confidential air than usual, and said she was delighted to find that I was more pleased with them than I had anticipated. I pretended not to know what she meant; she then said that she knew perfectly well that I had opposed the marriage of my brother-in-law with her daughter, and she confessed she was curious to know why I had done so. I said it was quite true, and I would tell her the whole truth; so I told her that I never considered it advisable to marry into a more powerful family than one's own, especially into the family of a Minister; for they were usually unreasonable and difficult to deal with, and one ran the risk of being crushed instead of finding support and assistance; for this reason I had not wished for a connection with them, but had suggested a daughter of the Duke d'Harcourt, for reasons which I have already mentioned. I got out of it by saying that, far from opposing the marriage, I would have supported it warmly if I had known them as well at that time as I did now.

Madame Chamillart was pleased by my candid answer, and at it being given so freely; she said she must be equally candid on her side. She then told me that more than a year ago the Maréchale de Lorge had begun negotiations for the marriage of her son with her elder daughter; that, after her marriage with the Duke de la Feuillade, she had done all she could to get the younger; and that, at the very time when the Maréchale told me there was not the slightest foundation for the rumours which were going about, the marriage was all but arranged. Finally, she told me that immediately after that conversation, the Maréchale had gone to L'Étang on some pretext (Madame Chamillart recalled the journey to my mind by reminding me of certain circumstances), and told her that I was strongly opposed to the marriage, and had suggested Mademoiselle d'Harcourt. I will not comment on this conduct on the part of the Maréchale; I mention it only to show what good people M. and Madame Chamillart were to treat me as they did after it, and to make all the advances. This set the seal on our friendship and intimate union.

The marriage turned out just as I had predicted to the Maréchale, it was of iron for her and her son, but of

gold for me. I do not mean financially, for Madame de Saint-Simon and I have always had a horror of what is called at Court "doing business," by which many persons of the highest position have enriched themselves; but it was a pleasure to be on confidential terms with Chamillart; I was able to render services to my friends, and, before very long, to satisfy my curiosity respecting very important matters relating to the Court and the State, to such a degree that I was posted up in the news from day to day. As for the marriage, it is enough to say that the husband and wife never got on together; that my brother-in-law completed his ruin by leaving the service, though he was offered promotion to the command of a brigade out of his proper turn; and that it was to Madame de Saint-Simon and myself that Chamillart confided his grief, and all the troubles of his family. The Maréchale de Lorge had never acquired their friendship or esteem; she retired into strict seclusion, a wise step in view of the other world, and not less wise so far as this one was concerned. It must be said, to her credit, that in the end she came to herself, and that her life was one of repentance, austerity, and good works. It was many years before I was reconciled to her; I shall return to the subject in the proper place.

I repeat, I should not have mentioned these unpleasant and uninteresting details, but I think it absolutely necessary to explain the origin of the intimacy between Chamillart and myself, which put me in a position to know and take part in things far beyond the reach of most men of my age and apparent position; especially as I was at the same time intimate with the party opposed to him, I mean the Chancellor and his son; and also with M. de Beauvilliers, who was on bad terms with Pontchartrain, but very friendly with Chamillart. I was also on confidential terms with Chamillart's daughters, and they told me an immense number of feminine trifles, often more important than they were aware of, which opened my eyes and let me into the secret of very considerable combinations.

Moreover, I learnt a great deal from my friends among the Ladies of the Palace, and from the Duchess de Villeroy. I was a great friend of hers, and also of her mother-in-law, the Maréchale; I had the pleasure of reconciling them to each other after a quarrel, which had lasted many years, and they were on friendly terms till death. The Duke de

Villeroy was also my friend, and I associated with the whole family in the most familiar way; only I never could bear the airs of the Marshal; I used to think he was like a pneumatic pump, and sucked up all the air round him, leaving us in a sort of exhausted receiver. I did not conceal my sentiments from his wife, or his son, or his daughter-in-law; they laughed at me, but could not make me alter them.

Not to have to recur to the unpleasant subject of my brother-in-law's marriage, I will mention in advance that soon afterwards he assumed the name of Duke de Lorge, which his father had rendered so illustrious.

CHAPTER VI

1703

Marriage of M. de Beauvilliers' half-sister—His stepmother—A bridegroom of eighty—Ten new Marshals appointed—Chamilly—D'Estrées—Châteaurenaud—M. de Lausun casts a spell over Cavoye—Vauban—Rosen—Huxelles—Tessé—Montrevel—Tallard—Harcourt—Consequences of leaving off snuff too suddenly—Villars to command in Germany—Release of Madame Guyon—The fanatics in Languedoc.

M. DE BEAUVILLIERS arranged a marriage between his half-sister and the only son of Marillac, Conseiller d'État, who was a Colonel and Brigadier of infantry. He had been my friend since we were quite young men, and I may say that he had every quality necessary to obtain distinction in the service, and to please the family into which he had the honour to marry. The Duke de Saint-Aignan, father of M. de Beauvilliers, having lost his first wife, a Servien, had been foolish enough to marry a creature sprung from the dregs of the people, who had had the care of his wife's dogs, and afterwards rose to be her lady's-maid. He died six years afterwards, completely ruined, and left two sons and a daughter by this fine marriage. Their mother was clever and virtuous. The King, who liked M. de Saint-Aignan, asked her more than once to assume her *tabouret*; but she always refused, and contented herself with taking care of M. de Saint-Aignan at home, without going into society. Her modest conduct pleased M. and Madame de Beauvilliers, and after M. de Saint-Aignan's death they took care of her and her children, who were brought up with their own, and treated with the same kindness. The wedding took place at Vaucresson, a little country house within reach of Versailles and Marly, which M. de Beauvilliers had bought; he always retired to it as often as his public duties would permit.

The old Duke de Gesvres, who was over eighty, married again. His bride was Mademoiselle de la Chênelaye; she was rich and handsome; the ambition of having a *tabouret*

made her consent. The King did all he could to dissuade him, but the old fellow wanted to spite his son, and insisted on having his own way. His wife, however, behaved well; she was a clever woman, and acquired such an ascendancy over her husband that she made up the quarrel between him and his son, got him to sign a deed of gift of his property, so that he might not complete his ruin; and before they had been married a year she induced him to resign his dukedom to his son; nobody could understand how she managed it. A great friendship sprang up between her and the Marquis de Gesvres, and it was carried on by his children, who always treated her with much consideration. It must be admitted, however, that she did not put herself to any inconvenience by making the Duke give up his property, for she had plenty of money of her own.

The Duke of Orleans was very anxious that his right to the throne of Spain, under certain contingencies, should be formally recognised. He had spoken to Louville on the subject when he came over about the King of Spain's Italian expedition, and our King had given his approval. It was now arranged that, two months after the return of the King of Spain to Madrid, the Abbé Dubois should go there and make the necessary arrangements; and after some little delay the recognition was granted in the form desired by the Duke of Orleans. This is the same Abbé Dubois whom I had occasion to mention when speaking of the Duke's marriage; I shall have only too much to say of him in the sequel.

On Sunday, the 14th of January, the King appointed ten Marshals of France; there were nine already, so that made nineteen; there was no fear of running short of them. The nine old ones were: Messieurs de Duras, Estrées (the father), Choiseul, Villeroy, Joyeuse, Boufflers, Noailles, Cattinat, Villars. The ten new ones were: Messieurs de Chamilly, Estrées (the son), Châteaurenaud, Vauban, Rosen, Huxelles, Tessé, Montrevel, Tallard, and Harcourt. The younger Estrées took the name of Marshal de Cœuvres, to distinguish him from his father; it is curious that they should have been Marshals of France at the same time, and that there should have been three Marshals in succession in their family, from father to son. I must say something about the new Marshals, several of whom made themselves conspicuous later on.

Chamilly's name was Bouton; he came of a noble family in Burgundy, none of whom ever wore the gown; several of its members were Governors of Dijon. He had served with distinction in Portugal and Candia. No one, to look at him and listen to him, would ever suppose that he could have been the object of such passionate love as that which inspires the famous "Portuguese Letters," nor that he could have written the replies to the nun which are preserved in that book. He held several important commands during the Dutch war, and distinguished himself by his admirable defence of Graves, which lasted more than four months, and cost the Prince of Orange 16,000 men. Louvois disliked him, and kept him back as much as possible, and Barbésieux was no more favourable to him than his father had been. But Barbésieux was succeeded by Chamillart, and his wife was a great friend of Madame de Chamilly.

The latter was a singularly accomplished person; even Louvois had hardly been able to resist her. She had been very religious from her earliest youth, but never paraded it; she had a great deal of pleasant wit, and her manners in society were charming, so that, although in reality she was entirely given up to good works, one would have thought she cared for nothing but worldly matters. Her conversation and manners caused her singular ugliness to be forgotten; the union between her and her husband was always close and affectionate. Chamilly himself was tall and stout; a most excellent man, brave and honourable, but so heavy and stupid that it was not easy to understand how he could have shown any military talent. Advancing years and disappointment had made him almost an imbecile. Both he and his wife were rich; they had no children. She had accompanied him in all his governments and commands, and contrived to manage everything, whilst making him believe that he did it all himself. Through Chamillart's influence she procured for him the command of La Rochelle and the adjoining provinces, and so paved his way to the Marshal's bâton. He obtained it the more easily because the King had always liked and esteemed him. His promotion, which had been too long delayed, was received with general applause.

The Count d'Estrées was fortunate. When Colbert induced the King to restore the Navy in 1655, his father, who had distinguished himself as a General, was one of the

officers selected for the marine service, and, after his first campaign, was appointed Vice-Admiral. M. de Seignelay, who was a friend of the Count d'Estrées, procured for him the reversion of this office in 1684, when he was only twenty-four years old. The King granted it on condition that his seniority should date only from the day on which he should be called upon to serve in that rank; but M. de Seignelay, an audacious Minister, contrived to omit this condition from the patent. In 1687 the Count d'Estrées was serving on shore at the siege of Barcelona, and claimed precedence as senior to all Lieutenant-Generals. A dispute arose, which Pontchartrain, then Secretary of State for the Navy, decided in favour of the Count d'Estrées; and the King gave way to him, though he remembered perfectly the condition which Seignelay had omitted. When this promotion of Marshals of France was decided on, Châteaurenau was the Vice-Admiral selected for the honour; but he was junior to the Count d'Estrées. The claims of the latter were supported by Pontchartrain, who wished to have two bâtons for the Navy; and, better still, he was backed up by the Noailles family, then at the height of their favour; his father and Cardinal d'Estrées were highly respected; and the King took great delight in the childish ways of the Countess d'Estrées.

There was nothing against him but his youth, as compared with the other candidates; he had been in many actions both by land and sea, and had commanded in several naval actions with success and reputation; he understood naval matters thoroughly, and combined knowledge and ability with industry. These qualities, combined with his good luck in obtaining his rank at the age of twenty-four, by means of Seignelay's audacious action, made him a Marshal of France at forty-two.

He was a very honourable man, but, having lived for a long time in great poverty, he did not disdain to enrich himself in the time of the famous Law, during the Regency. He succeeded in becoming enormously rich, and lived in a magnificent but most disorderly style. He collected a prodigious quantity of books, porcelain, diamonds, and other jewels, valuable curiosities of all kinds; yet he never knew what to do with them. He had more than 50,000 volumes, which remained, till his death, packed away in cases; his sister, Madame de Courtenvaux, gave him a

room at the Hôtel de Louvois to keep them in. It was the same with everything else. His servants were tired of borrowing linen every day for the great dinners which he gave; they begged him to allow them to open some cases full of it which he had imported ten years before from Holland, and at last he consented. There was a prodigious quantity of linen in the cases, but it was all frayed at the folds, so that by keeping it so long it had been completely spoilt.

He was always picking up curiosities. On one occasion it came into his mind that he had somewhere seen a bust of Jupiter Ammon, of great antiquity, and of a peculiar sort of marble; he was vexed at having missed the chance of buying it, and set people to work to hunt it up. One of them asked him what commission he would give to any one who could get it for him; he promised 1,000 crowns. The other began to laugh, and told him he should have it for nothing, and at once took him to the place where his own collections were stowed away, and there it was. I could give numberless stories about him and his absent-minded ways.

Although he was able and well-informed, his mind was confused. He could not explain anything intelligibly. I remember that one day, at the Council of Regency, the Count de Toulouse told me, as we were taking our seats, that Marshal d'Estrées was going to bring up a report from the Council of Marine, which was of some importance; that I should not be able to understand it from the Marshal's explanation, and, as we always sat next each other, he asked me to allow him to explain it in a low voice while the Marshal was speaking. The Count de Toulouse, though he had far less ability than the Marshal, was extremely clear-headed, and always expressed himself with great precision; from his explanation I understood the matter well enough to be of his opinion, but not so well as to be able to speak about it. In giving our opinions, I always spoke just before the Chancellor, and the Count de Toulouse after him; when it came to my turn I said, with a smile, that I concurred in the opinion which M. de Toulouse was about to express. The other members of the Council seemed rather surprised; the Duke of Orleans laughed, and said that was not the way to give an opinion. I explained my reasons, and I was allowed to vote in this way.

La Vrillière used to say of Marshal d'Estrées that he was like an overturned ink-bottle, which pours out, sometimes a thin stream, sometimes nothing, and then a succession of great blobs of ink ; and it was a very good description of his method of explaining his opinion. With all that he was a very good man, polite and courteous in conversation, and very good company ; but he was vainglorious and easily led astray ; and, though quite free from corruption, a thorough courtier. I must tell one or two more stories about him.

He was very fond of his place at Nanteuil, and had spent enormous sums on the garden ; he often had people to stay there ; but there was not a door or window in the house that would shut. He intended to renew all the woodwork of his house ; the wood was all brought and piled up in a large room which was completely filled with it. That is quite twenty-five years ago, and the wood is still piled up, and during all that time the bridge leading to the house has been in such a state that no one dares cross it except on foot. The Grand Equerry used to feed calves at Royaumont on milk and raw eggs with their shells, and send quarters of veal to the King ; it was excellent. Marshal d'Estrées was annoyed at always hearing of these calves, and thought he would feed one at Nanteuil in the same way. His orders were carried out, and, when the calf was quite fat, his people sent him word. But he thought if he went on feeding the animal it would become fatter still, so he persevered for more than two years in giving it milk and eggs, at great expense ; and at last, instead of a fat calf, he had nothing but a very useless bull. He was a great chemist, and a great enemy to the doctors ; he used to prescribe for people and compound expensive drugs for them, and, to show his good faith, used to be the first to take his own remedies. He and his wife always lived happily together, but after their own fashion respectively.

Châteaurenaud's family was quite unknown before the marriage of his great-grandfather with a sister of Cardinal de Retz. He was the most successful seaman of his day ; he won many battles and carried out some difficult enterprises. The misadventure at Vigo is not to be imputed to him, but to the obstinacy of the Spaniards, who would not listen to his warnings ; nevertheless, it was as much as Pontchartrain could do to persuade the King to give him the

bâton. That Secretary of State had a high opinion of Châteaurenaud ; and, moreover, he was glad to obtain a distinction for the Navy. The promotion was much applauded ; Châteaurenaud's bâton had been earned long before.

He was a little, thick-set man, with an extremely stupid expression ; and he did not belie his looks. One could not understand how he could ever have been good for anything. It was impossible to talk to him, or to listen to him, except when he was describing some sea-fight.' He was, nevertheless, a good and honourable man. After he became a Marshal of France he was often invited to Marly ; but whenever he drew near any group there it was a signal for it to break up and disperse in all directions.

He was related to Madame de Cavoye ; her husband had a charming house at Lucienne, quite near Marly, where he often went to dine with some choice company, consisting chiefly of artful and intriguing persons. There everything was talked over, and many schemes were safely hatched, for the King liked Cavoye, and was not suspicious of what went on in his house. It was an extremely select circle, and no outsider cared to intrude upon it. M. de Lausun, who was too much feared to be admitted into the privacy of any one, and who was much displeased in consequence, resolved, since he was not allowed to join this group of friends, at any rate to have a joke at their expense.

At the beginning of a long visit to Marly he went up to Châteaurenaud and told him, as a friend, that Cavoye and his wife, who were proud of being his relations, complained that they never saw him, and that he never went to Lucienne, where they always had pleasant people. He added that the King liked M. and Madame de Cavoye, that they were highly respected, and that it was better not to set them against him when it was so easy to make friends of them. He advised him, therefore, to go often to Lucienne, and pay long visits. He warned him that the Cavoyes had a way of receiving people coldly, as if they did not want to see them ; but, he said, it was only their way ; everybody had some peculiarity, and that was theirs ; they would be extremely vexed if any one really believed them, and acted accordingly, as was proved by the number of visitors who flocked to them, especially to their house at Lucienne. The Marshal was extremely grateful to Lausun for his friendly advice ; he had had no intention, he said, of giving offence to Cavoye, and

would certainly make a point of going to Lucienne as soon as possible. Lausun cautioned him not to let it be known that he had given him this hint, and left him.

Châteaurenaud lost no time in going to Lucienne. His appearance there caused a little commotion among the assembled guests, followed by silence ; it was as if a shell had fallen in the midst of this quintessence of the Court. The Cavoyes hoped it was only a short call, but to their despair he stayed the whole afternoon. Two days later he came at dinner-time ; that was worse still. They did all they could to make him understand that they were there to live quietly and avoid society ; it was no good, Châteaurenaud knew well enough what that meant, and thought he was doing the right thing in paying no attention to it. He stayed till the evening ; and annoyed them in this way nearly every day, no matter how clearly they showed him that he was not wanted. But that was not all : when they returned to Versailles he was perpetually in their rooms ; and whenever he went with the Court to Marly he always plagued them at Lucienne. It was a sort of leprosy from which Cavoye never managed to purify himself ; he complained that he was under enchantment, and his friends were as much vexed as he was. Long afterwards he found out that Lausun was the sorcerer who had cast his spell upon him. The story came to the ears of the King, who nearly died of laughing ; and Cavoye and his friends nearly died of exasperation.

Vauban's name was *Le Prêtre* ; he came of a very insignificant family of gentlemen in Burgundy ; but he was one of the most honourable and virtuous men of his day, and the most skilled in the art of fortifying and besieging places ; he was extremely simple, truthful, and modest. He was below the middle height and rather stumpy, but looked like a soldier all over ; at the same time his manners were rustic and coarse, not to say rude and brutal. But it was only manner ; in reality he was gentle, sympathetic, and obliging ; and, though not polite, always respectful. He was extremely sparing of the lives of his men ; his courage led him to take all risks himself, and he gave the credit to others. With his open and straightforward conduct, incapable as he was of lending himself to anything false or bad, it is incomprehensible that he should have won the esteem and confidence of Louvois and the King.

More than a year before the promotion the King had mentioned to him that he intended to make him a Marshal of France. Vauban begged him to consider that such a dignity was not suitable to a man in his position ; he was not capable of commanding an army, and it would cause some embarrassment if, while he was in charge of a siege, the General commanding the army should happen to be junior to him as Marshal of France. This generous refusal only increased the King's desire to reward him. Vauban had conducted fifty-three sieges, at twenty of which the King had been present in person ; and he fancied that, in giving the bâton to Vauban, he was making himself a Marshal of France and doing honour to his own laurels. Every one was pleased to see Vauban receive this distinction, which was never attained by any other man of his class, before or since. I will say no more at present of this truly celebrated man ; I shall have occasion to mention him again.

Rosen was a native of Livonia. The Prince of Conti told me that when he went to Poland he made inquiries respecting his birth from persons on whom he could rely, and was told that he came of a very noble and ancient family, allied to the best houses in that country. He enlisted when very young, and served for some time as a private soldier in the cavalry. He was caught marauding with some others, and had to draw lots who should be shot. The farrier of his troop was among the number ; this man survived all their other comrades, and ended his days at the Invalides. Every year Rosen, even after he became Marshal of France, used to send for him, have him to dinner, and, when they had talked over their old campaigns, send him back with a good sum of money in his pocket. Besides this, he used to make frequent inquiries concerning him, and saw that he was comfortable and wanted nothing. Having risen to be an officer, Rosen was induced by a relation of his of the same name to enter the French service. This relation had commanded a regiment of cavalry at the battle of Lutzen, under the great Gustavus Adolphus ; he died in 1667, having given his daughter in marriage to the Rosen of whom I am now speaking.

He was a tall, lean man, and reminded one of a cunning, plundering old soldier ; one would not have cared to meet him at the corner of a wood on a dark night. One of his legs had been bent by the wind of a cannon-ball ; it was

stiff, so that he dragged it without bending the knee. He was an excellent cavalry officer, and could command a wing ; but when in chief command he was apt to lose his head. Though he never gave way to drunkenness he used to keep an excellent table, and entertained his guests with very interesting and instructive talk on military matters. He was rough in his outward manners, but he had a great deal of tact ; he knew how to suit himself to the persons he had to deal with, and used to say very witty and amusing things in the bad French which he affected. He knew the weakness of the King, and of our nation generally, for foreigners, and used to scold his son for speaking French too well, telling him that he would never be anything but a fool. On the whole, he was a man who always had an eye to his own fortune, but who deserved success, for he was a worthy, honourable man, and extremely brave. He took a fancy to me during the campaign of 1693, and was always very friendly ; he used to lend me his furnished house at Strasbourg every year. We shall see that he made a worthy and Christian ending.

Huxelles came of a family named de Laye, of no great antiquity ; some fortunate marriages were his stepping-stones to fortune, and it is necessary to explain them. His grandfather had married a Phélypeaux, so that he was nearly related to Châteauneuf, Secretary of State ; to Pontchartrain, the Chancellor ; and to Marshal d'Humières. His father's sister had made a poor match ; she married Beringhen, First Equerry, who had formerly been First Valet-de-chambre ; and her son, our Huxelles' first cousin, who succeeded his father as First Equerry, made a very good one by marrying a daughter of the Duke d'Aumont, whose mother was sister to M. de Louvois. Huxelles' father was killed in action, and he was brought up by his aunt, old Madame Beringhen, with her own children. Her son, the younger Beringhen, by his relationship and intimacy with Louvois and Barbésieux, became a sort of personage ; he always used his influence to help his cousin Huxelles. This explanation is necessary to render intelligible what follows ; I will only add that the Marquis de Créquy, son of the Marshal, had married the other daughter of the Duke d'Aumont, and that the M.M. de Créquy lived on very intimate terms with M. d'Aumont, the Louvois, and the Beringhens,

With such advantages Huxelles soon made his way. At the age of thirty-five, while still only a *maréchal-de-camp*, M. de Louvois obtained the chief command in Alsace for him, and four years later, in 1688, got him made Lieutenant-General and Knight of the Order. He continued to reside at Strasbourg till 1710, being a King, rather than a Commander-in-Chief, in Alsace ; and he served in all the campaigns on the Rhine as Lieutenant-General.

In person Huxelles was tall and rather stout, with a slow, dragging walk ; he had a large, pimpled face, which, however, was not ugly ; with great eyebrows, and under them a pair of small, quick eyes, which allowed nothing to escape them ; he looked just like a great, coarse cattle-dealer. He was very lazy, and very voluptuous ; his table was abundantly and exquisitely supplied every day ; he was given to debauchery after the fashion of the ancient Greeks, and made no attempt to conceal it. He gave himself great airs, even with his superior officers and comrades ; he was too lazy to rise from his seat for the most distinguished persons, seldom called on the General in command, and hardly ever mounted a horse during a campaign. With the Ministers and persons whom he feared, or whom he thought it advisable to flatter, he was supple and cringing ; but he domineered over everybody else, which had the effect of thinning his company and making it rather mixed.

His personal appearance and manners ; his great head, covered by a huge wig ; his habitual silence, seldom broken and then only by a few words ; a few smiles thrown in as occasion required ; his air of authority and importance,—all combined to give him a reputation for sagacity. And yet that ponderous head, concealed under its vast periwig, was better fitted to be a model for Rembrandt than to give sound counsel and advice. He was morally timid ; his heart and morals were alike false and corrupt ; he was full of jealousy and envy ; always bent on his own objects, and not very particular as to the means he employed to attain them, provided that he could maintain an outward show of probity and virtue ; but it was not difficult to see through this outward appearance, and, when really necessary, he sometimes discarded it altogether. Though not without parts and a certain amount of cultivation, he really knew very little, and was anything but a soldier ; he was always making difficulties without ever finding a solution for them. He was

thoroughly artful, and skilled in concealment ; incapable of friendship or of rendering a disinterested service to any one, always occupied with the schemes and tricks of a courtier. I never saw any one dressed with such affected simplicity ; he always wore a great hat with drooping brims pulled over his eyes, a grey coat buttoned all the way down, with no lace or gold about it, except gold buttons ; there was not a scrap of his blue ribbon to be seen, and his badge of the Holy Ghost was always concealed under his wig.

Up to the year 1710 his visits to Paris and the Court were rare ; he only came now and then to keep up his acquaintance with persons who might be useful to him. At last he got tired of Alsace, and contrived to get permission to live at Paris without resigning his command, and, what was still more important, without giving up his pay ; for, though he spent great sums on his pleasures, he was miserly. Under an outward show of indolence and indifference he was in reality consumed by ambition ; he was especially desirous of being made a Duke. Through the First-President de Mesmes, who was the devoted servant of M. and Madame du Maine, and a great friend of Beringhen's, he became closely connected with the bastards and their party ; and M. du Maine, who was taken in by his appearance of sagacity, and thought he might prove useful, procured him access to Madame de Maintenon.

He did not neglect Monseigneur. Beringhen and his wife were great friends of Mademoiselle Choin ; they spoke to her in praise of Huxelles, and she consented to see him. He paid great court to her, and even condescended to send her rabbits'-heads for her dog every day, all the way from the Rue Neuve St. Augustin to her house near St. Antoine. She brought him under the notice of Monseigneur, with whom he had private interviews at Meudon ; and that Prince, who was easily taken in, fancied that Huxelles' genius was capable of anything, and discoursed about it as much as he dared. No sooner was Monseigneur dead than the poor dog was forgotten ; there were no more rabbits'-heads forthcoming ; its mistress was forgotten too. She had been silly enough to believe in Huxelles' friendship for her ; she was surprised and hurt by this sudden abandonment ; and found means to let him know it. He assumed an air of surprise in his turn ; he did not understand, he said, what she had to complain of. He declared with effrontery that

he hardly knew her ; he was not known to Monseigneur except by name ; and he could not imagine what she meant. So ended this acquaintance, with the favour which had occasioned it ; and she never heard anything more of Huxelles. I have said enough for the present about this man. I shall have occasion to speak of him again ; we shall see him playing a prominent part in various important matters ; and finally disgracing himself in more ways than one.

I have spoken several times of Tessé, and given a description of him. As already mentioned, he had arranged the treaty for the marriage of the Duchess of Burgundy, and he derived great advantage from it. She made a point of assisting him in every way, as the author of her happiness ; she felt that in doing so she pleased the King, Madame de Maintenon, and her husband. Nevertheless, she was sometimes vexed and embarrassed to hear Tessé say the silly things which he often did ; she confessed as much to some of her ladies. Wit was not Tessé's strong point ; he made up for it by a great familiarity with the ways of society, and by unfailing good luck. Such ability as he possessed was altogether in the way of subtlety and clever scheming ; it was exactly the kind required by a courtier. We shall come across him again more than once.

Montrevel was far the most distinguished of the new Marshals so far as birth was concerned. It may be said to have been his only claim to distinction, except bravery, and a person which had now become short and thickset, but had formerly been handsome and enchanted the ladies. The King always had a prejudice in favour of good-looking people (Tessé's face had been of some service to him), and he took a fancy to Montrevel. The same cause brought about a friendship between Montrevel and Marshal de Villeroy, who was always his patron. It was a very suitable friendship, for there never were two men more alike ; except that Villeroy was thoroughly disinterested, whereas Montrevel, who was poor and a born spendthrift, was a great pillager, and would have robbed a church altar.

In a passing fit of displeasure with the Duke de Chevreuse the King resolved to deprive him of his troop in the *chevaux-légers* of the guard and give it to Montrevel. He told the latter of his intention, with strict injunctions to say nothing about it ; but Montrevel was so intoxicated with his good

fortune that he confided the secret to La Feuillade, whom he believed to be his friend. But La Feuillade never thought of anything but his own interests, and, as his hatred for Louvois had made him intimate with Colbert, he hastened to tell the latter of his son-in-law's danger. Colbert spoke to the King about it, and he at once confirmed Chevreuse in his post, not so much out of consideration for him as because he was angry with Montrevel for not keeping the secret ; he made him feel his displeasure for some time. Still, he liked him ; Montrevel's fatuity, though carried to excess, was just what pleased the King. He was in favour with the ladies ; he could discuss the fashions ; he played high ; he talked in a sort of jargon of his own invention like phrases of music, without any sense in it ; he gave himself great airs,—all this was well calculated to excite the admiration of fools, and it was wonderfully to the taste of the King. These attractions were enhanced by his assiduous military service, which was inspired only by bravery and ambition, for he never had sense enough to know his right hand from his left. His probity was only skin-deep, and he had not sufficient ability to prevent his natural insincerity from peeping through. He was very mean, though inordinately proud ; for pride and meanness, though very opposite qualities, are often found combined in the same person ; and he possessed them both to an extreme degree. Such was this man whom the King was pleased to make a Marshal of France. He dared not trust him with an army, however ; but gave him various commands in the provinces, which he plundered, without being any better off for it. We shall come across him again in these Memoirs. Nothing could be more absurd than his end.

Tallard was a man of a very different stamp. He had many traits in common with Harcourt ; like him, he was witty, acute, a clever intriguer, desirous of popularity, and charming in society. They were both industrious, both persevering, both could do difficult work with ease, and neither of them ever did anything, even the most insignificant actions, without some object in view. Both were agreeable, polite, easy of access at all times, and capable of rendering a service provided that it did not strain their credit too much ; both were masters of details, and excelled in the art of keeping their armies well fed and supplied in every way ; both, without any relaxation of discipline, were adored by

their officers and soldiers ; both had risen by assiduous military service, in winter as well as in summer ; and by success in diplomatic missions. Harcourt, having the powerful support of Madame de Maintenon, was more haughty ; Tallard was more supple ; but both were actuated by the same ambition. Marshal de Villeroy, and, later on, the Soubises, were Tallard's chief supporters. His fortune was begun by a relationship, though not a very close one ; for at that time people made a point of helping their relations. His maternal grandmother was sister to the first Marshal de Villeroy ; she took a second husband of the name of Courcelles, and made some stir in her time by her gallantries. She died in 1688, and the Marshal, her brother, in 1685. Tallard's mother was well known in the great world, and he himself was brought up in the intimacy of the Villeroy family, and found his way into the best society of the Court.

He was a man of medium height ; he squinted slightly, and his eyes were very short-sighted, but they were full of fire and intelligence. His gaunt and meagre frame looked like the personification of ambition, envy, and avarice ; he was full of ability and pleasant wit, but his ambition was a torment to him ; he thought of nothing but his private objects, and the schemes and ruses which he employed to gain them. I have spoken of him before, and I shall have to mention him again more than once. It is sufficient in this place to say that, though nobody trusted him, every one was delighted to be in his company.

I have already said enough concerning the character of Harcourt. No *seigneur* was ever more popular in the society of the Court, and none was ever better qualified to play a leading part in it, or in the world ; and yet he had a great deal of pride and avarice, which are not attractive qualities. He managed to conceal his pride ; but his avarice was revealed by the singular stinginess of his table at Court ; he hardly ever entertained a guest, and in order to keep people away he always dined at the early hour of eleven. He was stout, not tall, and his ugliness was startling at first sight ; but his eyes were so bright, their expression was so piercing, so proud, and yet so mild, and his face was so abounding in intelligence and wit, that one soon forgot that he was ugly. He had put out one of his hips by a fall from the ramparts of Luxembourg, and it had never been properly

set, which made him limp in a very awkward way. He used to take as much snuff as Marshal d'Huxelles ; but he did not, like him, cover his coat and cravat with it. The King could not bear tobacco ; Harcourt perceived that his snuff was disagreeable to him, and feared lest this repugnance might interfere with his hopes and schemes. He therefore left off snuff all of a sudden ; and it was thought that this brought on the apoplectic fits from which he afterwards suffered. The doctors made him take snuff again, to recall the humours to their old courses ; but it was too late, he had left it off too long, and a return to it did him no good.

I have spoken at some length concerning these ten Marshals of France ; the merit of some of them invited me to do so, and moreover it was necessary to give a correct notion of personages whom we shall see figuring in more ways than one, especially Marshals d'Estrées, Huxelles, Tessé, Tallard, and Harcourt. I must now return to the ordinary chronicle of daily events.

The Bouillons, notwithstanding the deep disgrace of the Cardinal, contrived about this time to obtain a great favour for a member of their family. The Count d'Auvergne had been given the office of Colonel-General of the cavalry at the death of M. de Turenne ; the King had tried for a long time to induce him to sell it to M. du Maine, and, being angry at his obstinate refusal, showed his displeasure whenever he had an opportunity. The Count was a sort of ox, or wild boar, with a great deal of pride and very little intelligence ; he was, however, a very brave and honourable man, and a good officer up to a certain point ; he had served for a long time with distinction, and was a Lieutenant-General of old standing. He and M. de Soubise, though they always wished to be regarded as princes, were much disappointed at not being made Marshals of France. His two elder sons had disgraced themselves in the way I have described ; his other two were both in Holy Orders ; of the three sons of M. de Bouillon, the two elder had incurred the King's displeasure ; the other was the Count d'Évreux.

His face and manners pleased the ladies ; though not clever, he knew how to make the most of his advantages. Like all his relations, he was devoted to the grandeur of his family, though their influence had not done much for him ; he only had the command of a bad and newly raised regiment of infantry ; but he was assiduous in his military duties,

as well as in his attendance at Court. He had the art of making people like him ; they were sorry to see him so badly off, and with no apparent prospects of better fortune. He attached himself to the Count de Toulouse, and by doing so pleased the King, who sometimes gave him money to help him in his campaigns. The Count de Toulouse took a liking to him, and he turned it to good account. The King was glad to secure for his son a friend of the Count d'Évreux's standing and position, and allowed him to purchase his uncle's office of Colonel-General of cavalry, so that the Count d'Auvergne's obstinate refusal to sell it to M. du Maine was the cause of it remaining in his own family. He sold it to his nephew for 600,000 livres, as if he had not been a relation, for he was not well off. The sum appeared enormous for a younger son without fortune, and a high price for an office worth only 20,000 livres per annum. Cardinal de Bouillon gave his nephew 100,000 livres, and the Count de Toulouse, by his guarantee, enabled him to raise the balance.

The Count d'Évreux was but twenty-five years of age, and had only served in the infantry ; the King insisted on his serving for some time as Brigadier of cavalry before exercising any of his new functions ; but the period was considerably abridged through the influence of the Count de Toulouse. The King was very angry with Cardinal de Bouillon, with the Count d'Auvergne, whose son had so recently deserted, and also with the Chevalier de Bouillon on account of some impertinent speeches which he had made ; and yet he conferred a most signal favour on the Count d'Évreux, merely to please the Count de Toulouse, while not one of the four sons of France would have ventured to ask for the smallest favour for any one ; if they had, they would not only have met with a certain refusal, but the person for whom they asked it would have been ruined without hope of recovery.

The Court had just witnessed a marriage made under strange auspices, that of the Marquis de Beaumanoir with a daughter of the Duke de Noailles. His mother was sister to the Duke and the Cardinal de Noailles, and, as I have already related, his father Lavardin had, on his deathbed, forbidden him to marry a Noailles under pain of his malediction, and had begged the Cardinal to see that his wishes were respected. I do not know what offence the Noailles family had given him, but, knowing that his son would be

rich, he thought they would be sure to try to catch him, and put all the obstacles in their way which paternal authority could suggest, beside appealing to the honour of his brother-in-law. But Lavardin's wishes had a similar fate to those of kings, which are as much despised after their death as they are respected during their life-time.

Lavardin died in 1701 ; his son was only sixteen years old. The Noailles took charge of the boy, as his nearest relations, and after a time held out all kinds of inducements to him to marry their daughter ; they were the only people he knew ; and he yielded to them. That the Cardinal should have allowed the marriage caused general surprise ; those who knew, as I did, how firmly he had held his ground in the affair of M. de Cambrai, and how it was due to him alone that the Duke de Beauvilliers had not been dismissed, and his place in the Council given to his own brother, the Duke de Noailles, could not understand his giving way to the wishes of his family on an occasion which demanded the greatest firmness on his part. But even saints do not always perform virtuous actions ; they are but human, and they sometimes show it. On this occasion, and on another which will be related in its proper place, the Cardinal might have quoted the words used, in the bitterness of his heart, by Paul III when dying : " If my own people had not got the dominion over me, then should I be undefiled and innocent from the great offence." But if the Cardinal erred on these two occasions, he expiated his offence by long sufferings. This marriage did not last a year. Young Beaumanoir was killed at the battle of Spire ; and with him ended his illustrious house. His office of Lieutenant-General of Brittany fell a prey to the Noailles, and on the strength of it they married another daughter to Châteaurenaud, son of the newly appointed Marshal of France.

Villars, who had remained at Strasbourg, was appointed to the command of the army in Germany. He had his wife with him ; he was very much in love with her, and extremely jealous. He had given her as duenna one of his sisters, who hardly let her out of her sight for years, finding that this occupation suited her better than starving with Vogué, her husband, in their province. Villars' precautions excited a good deal of ridicule, and were not always successful.

The Elector of Bavaria had returned to his own dominions,

and was preparing for a vigorous campaign against the Emperor ; it was necessary, in accordance with our engagements, to send assistance to him. Villars was thinking more of his wife than of carrying out his orders ; but at last, after many delays, he crossed the Rhine and laid siege to the fort of Kehl, which capitulated on the 9th of March. Tallard replaced him in command on our side of the Rhine, and received strong reinforcements from Flanders. M. du Maine, with great difficulty, obtained leave for the Grand Prior to go to Italy, to serve under the command of his brother.

Through the influence of M. de la Rochefoucauld the son of Bachelier, First Valet of the Wardrobe, obtained the reversion of his father's office ; M. de la Rochefoucauld was very fond of the father, who had been his footman, and had pushed him on in the world. It must be said that Bachelier was a very honest man, very modest, and extremely grateful to his master ; he had a good deal of influence over him, which was very useful to his children, for M. de la Rochefoucauld was much fonder of his servants than he was of his children. Bachelier often took their part, with so much judgement and affection that they liked him almost as much as their father did ; I have heard M. de la Rocheguyon and the Duke de Villeroy speak of him in the highest terms. Soon afterwards M. de la Rochefoucauld was given a *brevet de retenue* ¹ on his offices of 200,000 livres ; as his son, M. de la Rocheguyon, held the reversion of these offices, the present was at his expense ; but he was obliged to give his consent.

Old Madame Juisy died at a great age, having by sheer ability kept her select circle at her house, and all her authority, to the last. I mentioned her when speaking of the marriage of the Countess d'Estrées, whose dowry she provided to a great extent. She had no children, and, *bourgeoise* though she was, she thought her relations unworthy to be her heirs. The Noailles, who scented a good inheritance, had always paid court to her ; it was not in vain, for she left nearly all she had to the Duchess de Noailles. She also left 40,000 livres to her good friend Cardinal d'Estrées, so that when he came back from Spain

¹ A *brevet*, or *billet de retenue*, gave the holder of an office a sort of property in it. The King guaranteed that, in the event of his death or resignation, his successor should be called upon to pay to him or his representatives the sum specified in the *brevet*. This enabled the holder of the *brevet* to raise money on the security of his office.

he might be able to buy a little house in the neighbourhood of Paris.

Another person of the same sex, who had acquired a greater celebrity, obtained her liberty about the same time. The friends of Madame Guyon, who were still faithful to her, were indebted to the compassionate charity of Cardinal de Noailles for her release from the Bastille, where she had been for some years without seeing anybody. She obtained leave to retire to Touraine; it was not the last epoch in the life of the holy woman, but she always kept her freedom after it. Cardinal de Noailles earned the gratitude of all her little flock.

Cardinal de Bouillon was not allowed to remain in peace in his place of exile; the monks of Cluni took advantage of it. He had extracted, rather than obtained, from them the coadjutorship of the Abbey for his nephew, the Abbé d'Auvergne. They had not dared to oppose the Cardinal at a time when he was in the height of his favour with the King, but they had kept in reserve a means of fighting the question some day. They no sooner saw the Cardinal in disgrace than they contested the coadjutorship before the Grand Council, and gave the Bouillons a good deal of trouble. The best weapon the monks had was to persuade the judges that the King, being displeased with their Abbot, was on their side; so that the Bouillons were obliged to muster their relations, and make a display of their influence, in order to convince the judges, by the assistance openly given to them, that the King intended to remain neutral. I could not refuse to go with the Duke d'Albert and the Abbé d'Auvergne to meet the judges, and tell each of them very positively that the King took no side in the question. These solicitations lasted some time; at last, on the 30th of March, the case was decided in favour of the Abbé d'Auvergne by a unanimous vote. The Bouillons were very grateful to me, and repaid me afterwards in another affair, when they gave me very warm and useful assistance.

Montrevel was sent to Languedoc, where the religious sectaries were giving some trouble. Many of them had taken up arms, and committed cruel outrages on parish priests and others. The Protestants in other countries did their best to stir up this fire, which was on the point of becoming a devouring conflagration. Montrevel did not find these fanatics so easy to subdue as he had anticipated.

They were called fanatics, because each troop of these rebellious Protestants had with it a pretended prophet or prophetess, who, in concert with the chiefs, did what they pleased with these people, and were followed by them with blind obedience and inconceivable fury.

Languedoc had long been groaning under the tyranny of Basville, the Intendant, who had contrived to have his brother-in-law, Broglio, appointed military commander in the province. In this way everything was subject to Basville, for Broglio, an incapable man, was like a school-boy in the presence of his brother-in-law. Basville was a man of genius, very enlightened, active, and industrious, with a domineering spirit which crushed all resistance, and perfectly unscrupulous as to the means he employed. He was feared by the Ministers, who would not allow him to come near the Court, and, in order to keep him in Languedoc, permitted him to do as he pleased in that province.

I do not know whether he and Broglio wished to create an opportunity for displaying their military skill, but they took to worrying unconverted or half-converted Protestants, so that at last they drove them into rebellion. The Republic of Geneva and the Duke of Savoy sent arms and food to the rebels very secretly, as well as money ; so that for some time it was a puzzle how they contrived to keep together, and make daring enterprises, when to all appearance they were in want of everything. The fanaticism which took possession of them was a fortunate thing for us, for it led them to commit horrible excesses, murdering and torturing priests and monks. If they had respected the laws of war, and confined themselves to demanding freedom of conscience and reduction of taxes, it is probable that many Catholics would have sided with them. They were practically in possession of whole districts ; and towns like Nîmes and Uzès were favourable to them ; there were even gentlemen of distinction in the province who received them secretly into their houses, and furnished them with intelligence. The Cevennes and the surrounding country made an admirable retreat for rebels of this kind.

When Montrevel arrived he found few troops in the province, and neither arms, artillery, nor supplies ; he was obliged to ask for reinforcements, and, in the meantime, the fanatics were laying waste the country. Twenty battalions and some artillery were sent to him, but he did

not turn them to much account. A few of the rebel chiefs were taken prisoners in skirmishes, and hanged; they all belonged to the dregs of the people, and their party was neither dismayed nor discouraged.

The critical condition of affairs at home and abroad did not prevent the King from amusing himself with balls at Marly.

CHAPTER VII

1703

Béchameil—A kick taken as a compliment—The Duchess de Brancas—Maréchal appointed First Surgeon—His visit to Port-Royal-des-Champs—Madame de Grammont—Illness of the Count d'Ayen—The Archbishop of Reims—Discovery of disloyal papers in his diocese—He gives up his rooms to the Count d'Ayen, and recovers the King's favour—Death of Gourville—Death of Cardinal de Bonzi—Of the Duke de la Ferté—A captive of the Jesuits.

BÉCHAMEIL died about this time at an advanced age. Madame Desmarets and the wife of Cossé, who had just become Duke de Brissac, were his daughters. Béchameil had been much mixed up in financial affairs, but had preserved his reputation; so far, at least, as a financier who has enriched himself can preserve it. He was superintendent of Monsieur's household, and made himself liked and esteemed in that capacity. He was a consummate judge of pictures, jewels, and furniture, and had exquisite taste in building and laying out gardens; all the finest things at St. Cloud are due to him. The King often consulted him on such subjects, and sometimes took him to Marly; he would have given him more marks of his favour but for the jealousy of Mansart. Béchameil spent immense sums in embellishing his place near Beauvais; when he made his entry there the Count de Fiesque wrote some extremely funny verses about it, with the refrain: "Long live the King, and Béchameil, his favourite." The King nearly died of laughter at them, and poor Béchameil of mortification. He was a good-looking man, and fancied that he was like the Duke de Grammont. The Count de Grammont, seeing him walking one day in the Tuileries gardens, said to his companions: "I will bet you that I give Béchameil a kick behind, and that he will feel highly flattered by it"; and immediately did so. Béchameil turned round in great astonishment, whereupon the Count de Grammont made the most humble apologies, saying

that he had mistaken him for his nephew. Béchameil was delighted, and so were the bystanders.

The Duchess de Ventadour, seeing that her mother, the Maréchale de la Mothe, was growing old, and that there was reason to hope that the Duchess of Burgundy would soon become a mother, thought it was time to leave Madame's service. She wished to obtain the reversion of the office of governess to the Children of France, and thought her position in Madame's household might be made a pretext for refusing it. Her old friend, Marshal de Villeroy, had succeeded in gaining for her the good-will of Madame de Maintenon, who, moreover, was pleased by her resemblance to herself in a way which touched her nearly; that is, she had led a life of gallantry, plastered over later on by religion.

Madame, who liked her, and had been well served by her at the time of Monsieur's death, entered into her views, and looked out for some Duchess to take her place; she wanted one who was separated from her husband and without a penny; one, in fact, in the same position as Madame de Ventadour herself at the time when she so far forgot what was due to her rank as to enter Madame's service, to the great astonishment of the King and everybody else. It was some time before Madame could find such a miserable Duchess; at last, the Duchess de Brancas presented herself, and was gladly accepted. She was sister to the Princess d'Harcourt, but no two persons could be more unlike each other. She was a woman of very little intelligence, but virtuous and religious throughout her life, and thoroughly unhappy. She and her husband were cousins, children of two brothers; their grandmother was sister to the first Marshal-Duke d'Estrées, and to the beautiful and celebrated Gabrielle.

The Duke de Brancas had lost both his parents at the age of sixteen. His uncle, the Count de Brancas, had been a noted figure in the wittiest and most gallant society of his time; he had been on good terms with the King, and with the two Queens, his wife, and mother. We have seen elsewhere that he was on still better terms with Madame de Maintenon, while she was only Madame Scarron, and that she always remembered it. He had married his eldest daughter to the Prince d'Harcourt: not having much to give the younger, he thought of his nephew, who was not

well off and much neglected, having only his uncle to take care of him. He was several years younger than his cousin, but his uncle, partly by kindness, partly by authority, induced him to marry her. It does not take much to overcome the resistance of a boy of seventeen, without any relations to back him up, so he was married against his will, in 1680 ; his bride received 100,000 livres from the King, and very little from her father, who died six months later.

The death of his father-in-law removed the only check on the Duke de Brancas. He was an extremely witty man, but quite deficient in sense and solidity ; he abandoned himself to the lowest and most disgusting debauchery, and ruined himself in low society. His wife became an object of dislike to him as being the cause of his unfortunate marriage, though it was no fault of hers ; she had, literally, not enough money to procure food and clothes, and was subject to continual ill-treatment which all her gentleness and patience were unable to soften. Without the assistance of the Maréchale de Chamilly she would have died of want. At last she got the Duke de Brancas to agree to a separation, and, that it might be final and complete, he beat and kicked her in the presence of Madame de Chamilly and many other persons. Madame de Chamilly took her to live with her, and she had been there some years when Madame took her. She was still burdened with children, about whom her husband troubled himself very little. Madame thought herself much honoured by having her as a member of her household, and treated her with great distinction ; her gentleness and virtue made her much liked at Court.

Félix, First Surgeon to the King, died about this time, and on Fagon's recommendation Maréchal was appointed in his place. Beyond his professional skill he had not much ability, but he had a great deal of common sense ; he was very honourable, straightforward, and outspoken ; a good, kind-hearted man, always ready to do a service ; when he had once made good his footing with the King (and in his kind of domestic employment it did not take very long) he did not hesitate to run some risk to restore a friend to favour ; he would even do it for other people if he thought justice required it. It will be seen, later on, that I have a particular reason for speaking at some length of Maréchal.

who became a sort of personage in the interior cabinets, and, notwithstanding his favour, always remained modest and respectful, though somewhat rough in his manners. He had been our family surgeon in my father's time, and was always attached to us.

He told a story to Madame de Saint-Simon and myself which is worth repeating. Less than a year after his appointment, when he was already in high favour and on a familiar footing with the King, but still attending sick persons of all classes in the neighbourhood of Versailles (as he always continued to do), he was asked by the surgeon to the Convent of Port-Royal-des-Champs to meet him in consultation; it was to see a nun there, whose leg it was thought necessary to amputate. Maréchal made an appointment for the following day. Next morning, as he was coming away from the King's *lever*, he was asked to be present at some operation; he excused himself on the plea of an engagement at Port-Royal. At this word somebody drew him to one side and asked if he knew what he was about in going to Port-Royal. Maréchal was quite ignorant of all the affairs which had made such a stir in connection with that name; he was astonished at the question, and still more so when he was told that he ran great risk of losing his appointment; he could not understand why the King should be displeased at his going, to see whether a nun ought to have her leg cut off or not. As a compromise he agreed to tell the King before going there. Accordingly he presented himself when the King returned from Mass, and, as it was an unusual hour for him, the King was surprised, and asked what he wanted. Maréchal, with great simplicity, explained what brought him, and confessed his own surprise. At the name of Port-Royal the King drew himself up, as he usually did when anything displeased him, and remained silent for the space of two or three paternosters, looking serious and thoughtful; then he said to Maréchal: "I allow you to go, but on condition that you go at once, so as to have plenty of time; under the pretext of curiosity you are to visit the whole of the convent; you are to see the nuns in the choir, and in all places where it is possible to see them; you are to make them talk, to examine everything as closely as possible, and report to me this evening."

Maréchal did as he was commanded; his return was

awaited with impatience; the King asked for him several times, and when he arrived kept him for nearly an hour, putting all sorts of questions to him. Maréchal's report was one continuous eulogium of Port-Royal; he said the first question put to him was concerning the King's health; and he had never been in a place where so many prayers were offered on his behalf. He had been present at the services in the choir, and could testify to it. He expressed admiration for the charity, patience, and penitence which he had noticed there, and added that he had never been in a place which conveyed such an impression of piety and sanctity.

When he had finished the King sighed, and said the nuns there were holy women, who had been hardly used; sufficient allowance had not been made for their ignorance of facts, and their natural obstinacy; and matters had been carried too far with regard to them. Such was the impression made on the King's mind by the straightforward report of a disinterested observer, concerning whom he could have no suspicions, and whom, for that reason, he allowed to speak freely. But the King was enslaved by the other party, and listened only to their opinions; so this accidental impression of the truth was soon obliterated. It had quite passed from his mind when, a few years later, Father Tellier caused the buildings at Port-Royal to be destroyed, down to the very foundations, and their site to be passed under the plough.

Félix had been given, for his life, a little house in the park of Versailles, at the end of the canal; he had made a very pretty place of it. The King now gave it to the Countess de Grammont. The curious *Memoirs of the Count de Grammont*, written by himself,¹ tell us that she was a Hamilton, and relate how he married her in England. She had been beautiful, and still retained her good looks, with a very dignified expression. No one could be wittier than she was, nor, in spite of her pride, more agreeable. She had been a Lady of the Palace to the Queen; her whole life had been passed in the best society of the Court; and she had always been on good terms with the King, who enjoyed her wit, and had become accustomed to her free manners in the intimacy of his private life with his

¹ They were not written by himself, but by his brother-in-law, Anthony Hamilton.

mistresses. She was a woman who had had adventures of gallantry in her time, but had, nevertheless, always respected herself ; as she had beak and claws, she was highly respected at Court, even by the Ministers, whom she took little pains to conciliate. Madame de Maintenon was afraid of her, but never succeeded in getting rid of her.

Madame de Grammont, who had watched Madame de Maintenon rise from the dust to a height surpassing the tallest cedar-trees, was quite aware of her hatred and jealousy, but never could bring herself to bow the knee to her. Her parents were Catholics, and she had been brought up at Port-Royal ; the seeds sown there germinated and bore fruit ; she became truly religious long before the age when her mirror might have warned her to change her mode of living. Her affection for the nuns of Port-Royal sometimes overcame her prudence, and it was in this way that Madame de Maintenon hoped to turn the King against her. But her efforts were unavailing ; the Countess used to extricate herself so pleasantly and with so much easy wit that the King's reproaches died away, and she was on more familiar terms with him than ever ; she even ventured to look disdainfully at Madame de Maintenon and treat her to a few witty and sarcastic remarks.

As I have already mentioned, she presumed too far on her impunity, and spent a whole week at Port-Royal ; the King was much displeased, and she had to make apologies ; but they were reconciled, although she refused to give up going to Port-Royal, merely promising the King to have so much regard for his feelings, for so he expressed it, as not to disappear again for so long a time. That happened during the previous year. The gift of Moulineaux, the little house left vacant by the death of Félix, now gave rise to a good deal of talk, and showed how high she stood in the King's favour. This place, which she called Pontali, became the fashion ; the Duchess of Burgundy and the Princesses often went to visit her there. It was not every one who was admitted ; and the fear of Madame de Maintenon's displeasure only kept away a very few of her most devoted slaves. The King liked to show that he was not governed by her, and for that reason he was the more pleased to mark his favour for the Countess de Grammont. She gave herself no airs on that account, but continued to behave to the Court exactly as she had done before.

Madame de Maintenon was consoled for this petty vexation by a great deliverance : her brother died at Vichy, where he had gone to take the waters ; still under the care of Madot, the Sulpician priest, who soon afterwards received his reward in the shape of a good bishopric. I have already said enough concerning this M. d'Aubigné, and will add nothing here. No offices fell vacant by his death ; only a Collar of the Order, and the Governorship of Berry, of which Count d'Ayen, his son-in-law, held the reversion.

That son-in-law was in very bad health, and the doctors could do nothing for him ; the only symptom was great pain at the pit of the stomach. He was visibly wasting away, and it was out of the question for him to go on active service ; he spent the summer by the fireside, wrapped up as in the most bitter winter. Madame de Maintenon often went to see him ; and, what seemed extraordinary, the Duchess of Burgundy sometimes spent the afternoon with him. Whether he had some domestic reasons, or whether it was the mere whim of an invalid, he got tired of being in the apartments of his father and mother, where he and his wife were very comfortably quartered ; they were so large that they went by the name of the Rue de Noailles, and took up quite half the story above the gallery in the new wing. He went at first into some rooms which the Duke of Berry had lately given up ; but, afterwards, asked the Archbishop of Reims to give up his rooms, which were at the other end of the *château*. The request was the more uncivil because the Archbishop at that time was on very bad terms with the King, and as the Count d'Ayen had no power to give him the Duke of Berry's rooms in exchange, it was in point of fact, equivalent to turning him out altogether.

The cause of the Archbishop's disfavour is worth mentioning. The famous Arnaud had died at Brussels in 1694, and Father Quesnel, so well known at the Oratory, had succeeded him as chief of the Jansenist party. Like his master, he kept himself concealed, and the Jesuits and their allies directed all their machinations against him. Being now in full possession of the consciences of the Kings of France and Spain, they thought the time had arrived when, with the assistance of those monarchs, they might try to arrest Father Quesnel and seize his papers. He was betrayed, and arrested at Brussels ; I leave the very curious details to

Jansenist historians ; it is enough for me to say that he contrived to break through a wall, and escaped with great difficulty to Holland. But his papers were seized, and among them were many which the Jesuits were very glad to get hold of : ciphers, with their key, lists of names, and many letters.

A Benedictine monk of the Abbey of Auvillé in Champagne was implicated ; it was determined to arrest him and seize all the papers in the monastery. The monk escaped, and no papers were found in his cell, but a great quantity in that of the Sub-Prior ; they were all brought to Paris and examined. They included many letters which had passed between Father Quesnel and the monk, and also a long correspondence, through him, between Father Quesnel and the Archbishop of Reims. The worst of it was that there was found in the monk's handwriting the rough copy of a book which had been printed in Holland not long before, containing very republican sentiments, making little distinction between monarchy and tyranny.

This monk of Auvillé therefore stood convicted of having written this anti-monarchical book ; it was suspected that it expressed the sentiments of Father Quesnel, and that, if the Archbishop did not share them, he had at any rate been privy to the publication. He had always treated the Jesuits roughly ; they were his bitter enemies, and it may readily be supposed that they were not slow in taking advantage of their discovery. The King was extremely indignant with the Archbishop ; he made matters worse by remaining in his diocese instead of going to the King to defend himself ; when he did go he had great difficulty in obtaining an audience, and met with a most unfavourable reception. He remained in marked disgrace till the time when the Count d'Ayen asked him to turn out of his rooms. This was not for a considerable time afterwards ; but I have thought it better to tell the whole story at once, so that I might not have to come back to it.

The Archbishop was far too well acquainted with the Court not to seize this favourable opportunity. He knew that Madame de Maintenon was better satisfied with her niece than she had been at one time, and in great anxiety about the Count d'Ayen's illness ; that she disliked the Duchess de Noailles, and was rather bored even by the Duke ; he understood that she would be delighted if the Count and

Countess d'Ayen could have his rooms, which were separated from those of the Noailles by the whole length of the *château*, so that she might visit them quietly, without interruption. He therefore replied by sending his keys with all the politeness of a rustic in disgrace, protesting that even if he did not return to his diocese, he did not require his rooms ; he had all his furniture removed the same day, and went to lodge at his town house.

Next day the King happened to meet him, and, going straight to him, thanked him in the most gracious way ; he said it was not right that he should be turned out altogether, and told him to go and see whether the apartments of the Duke of Berry, lately occupied by the Count d'Ayen, would suit him ; adding that, contrary to the rule he had made not long before, he would order the Department of Public Buildings to make any alterations the Archbishop thought necessary, at the public expense. The Archbishop, encouraged by this gracious reception, asked for another audience, which was as satisfactory as the first had been otherwise. The King restored all his favour to him, and on his part, without being asked, he promised to treat the Jesuits more favourably. The King often inquired how the alterations were progressing in his new quarters ; though not quite so large as his old ones, they were among the fine apartments with a view of the gardens, on the same floor as the King's rooms and the gallery of the new wing. So it is that, in a Court, the merest trifles are sometimes sufficient to extricate people from the most hopeless situations ; these fortunate chances, however, are not for everybody.

Gourville died about this time, aged eighty-four or eighty-five, at the Hôtel de Condé, where he had been supreme nearly all his life. He had originally been a footman in the service of the late M. de la Rochefoucauld ; who, finding that he possessed a good deal of ability, tried to push him on in the world. Gourville made himself very useful in managing M. de la Rochefoucauld's private affairs, and was afterwards employed by him in the important political intrigues of that time. In this way he became known to M. le Prince, and, with his master's consent, joined him ; he remained ever afterwards with the Condé family. He has left Memoirs of those troubled times coming down to the King's marriage, and the return of M. le Prince after the Peace of the Pyrenees. Through his ability and good sense he made a number of

influential friends, and became a sort of personage ; he was intimate with M. Fouquet, and by this means became enormously rich. His influence with the two Princes of Condé, who placed implicit confidence in him, caused him to be regarded with respect and consideration. He never forgot his original station, nor that he owed everything to M. de la Rochefoucauld ; he was naturally rough in his manners, but never forgot himself, though he always lived in the most illustrious society ; even the King treated him with distinction.

The most extraordinary thing is that he was privately married to one of M. de la Rochefoucauld's three sisters. He was continually with her at the Hôtel de la Rochefoucauld ; but always, even with her, on the footing of an old servant of the family. M. de la Rochefoucauld and all the family were aware of the marriage, as nearly every one was ; but no one would have guessed it to see them together. He was a very tall, stout man, and had been very handsome ; he retained his good looks, with perfect health and all his wits about him, till the end. He had a few well-chosen servants ; when he became old he sent for them, and told them that, though he was well satisfied with them, he intended to leave them nothing by his will ; but he would raise their wages very considerably every year as long as he lived ; so they had better take good care of him and pray God for his preservation, for in this way they would get more out of him than they could have expected by way of inheritance. He kept his word to them to the letter. He had no children, and all his wealth went to some nephews and nieces whom no one ever saw, and who remained in obscurity.

Cardinal Bonzi died at Montpellier about the middle of July, aged seventy-three. He was Archbishop of Narbonne, and a Commander of the Order, and held five Abbeys. These Bonzi are one of the first families of Florence ; they have held some of the most important offices in that republic, and intermarried with the Medici. The Cardinal was a stumpy little man ; his face had formerly been handsome, and remained so even in his old age. I never saw such fine, piercing black eyes as he had, and his expression was noble and full of intelligence. He was very courteous and kind, with charming manners ; always ready to oblige ; very clever, without the slightest tincture of insincerity or meanness. He possessed an easy and forcible eloquence ; and

I have heard, from those who lived with him, that his conversation was delightful ; he could be familiar without losing his dignity ; he was always easy of access, and never puffed up by his favour and high position. With such qualities, and a very sound insight into men's characters, it is not surprising that he made himself extremely popular at Court and everywhere.

His position at Narbonne gave him considerable influence over the affairs of Languedoc ; his personal popularity with all classes made him absolute master there. Basville, the Intendant of the province, who meant to reign there himself, was at a loss to know how to supplant him ; at last he took advantage of the King's new-born zeal for religion, which became less ardent afterwards, but led him at that time to attempt to reform other people's conduct. Basville, through the Jesuits, who were devoted to him and who are not fond of great prelates like Bonzi, sent reports to the King unfavourable to his morals. The good Cardinal, at an age when the passions have usually lost their force, had fallen madly in love with a certain Madame de Gange. Husbands like M. de Soubise are not so rare as may be supposed ; this love was profitable to M. de Gange ; though the whole province saw what was going on, he shut his eyes to it resolutely and turned it to good account. The scandal was in fact very serious, and would have made more noise but for the personal popularity of the Cardinal. Basville stirred it up as much as possible, and procured some sharp rebukes from the King, conveyed in letters written by Father de la Chaise.

Bonzi went to Court, hoping to set matters right by his presence, but he found himself mistaken ; the King knew too much about the affair, and his own experience had taught him how much weight to attach to the voluntary blindness of the husband. He returned to his province enraged with Basville, and a struggle ensued between them which lasted for some years. At last Basville got the upper hand ; and the Cardinal was grieved and mortified by the arrival of a *lettre-de-cachet* banishing Madame de Gange to a great distance. He was accused of having enriched her at the expense of the province, and there was some truth in it. His heart and his reputation alike suffered ; from this time his power and popularity declined ; Basville became absolute master, and let the Cardinal and his few remaining

friends feel it. The Cardinal fell into bad health; he had attacks of epilepsy which affected his head; the last time he appeared at Court he was quite unlike his former self; he even appeared shrunken. He died soon after his return to Languedoc.

The Duke de la Ferté also died this summer, of dropsy, at the age of forty-three. His bravery had earned him rapid promotion; he was a very good General, and it was hoped that he would command an army with as much distinction as the Marshal, his father. He was very witty, gay and amusing, excellent company; but wine and low debauchery were his ruin. The King, who liked him, did all he could to make him change his habits; he spoke to him several times in his private room, sometimes kindly, sometimes with severity; but he was incorrigible, and during his last campaigns was almost incapable from drunkenness. He was separated from his wife, a daughter of the Maréchal de la Mothe, by whom he left only two daughters.

No one knew what had become of his brother, the Chevalier de la Ferté, who was a queer sort of blackguard; he was supposed to be dead. His other brother was led away by the Jesuits while still a child, and joined their Society; his father met him one day on the Pont-Neuf with his alms-bag on his back, as was then the custom for young Jesuit novices; he sent his footman to catch him, and the young man got away with great difficulty. He was also very clever, and became a famous preacher; but he liked good cheer and good company, and was not intended by nature for a religious life. The Jesuits became displeased with him, and sent him into seclusion at La Flèche, where he died long after his brother. I daresay he regretted having taken the vows which prevented him from succeeding to his brother's dignity. It became extinct thirty-eight years after its creation.

CHAPTER VIII

1703

The Duke of Burgundy appointed to the army of the Rhine—Villars and the Elector of Bavaria—His greed for money—A favour for the Duke of Orleans—Officers of the Order—"Veterans" and "Rapés"—The Princess des Ursins acquires complete authority in Spain—Dismissal of Louville—Death of St. Évremond—Cause of his banishment—The Archduke Charles proclaimed King of Spain by the Emperor—Victory of Höchstädt—Treachery of the Duke of Savoy—Phélypeaux—Coigny—His plebeian origin—He refuses a Marshal's bâton unwittingly—Victory of Spire—Pretension of Vendôme—The Duke of Alba—A queer vow.

THE Duke of Burgundy went to take command of Marshal Tallard's army on the Rhine, where Prince Louis of Baden and the other Imperialist Generals were in no condition to oppose him seriously. The Empire was shaken to its centre by the successes of the Elector of Bavaria, who hoped to be reinforced shortly by the junction of our army under Villars. That Marshal's head was turned by his recent favour, and the glory which he had acquired at other people's expense at the battle of Friedlingen; he thought he was in a position to aspire to anything. A dukedom was his ambition; he took advantage of the Elector's necessities to extort his good offices with the King. The request seemed preposterous, and was flatly refused. Then Villars, having nothing more to expect from the Elector, thought only of filling his own pockets. He levied contributions in all districts within reach of his detached parties, not sparing even the Elector's country, and amassed millions. I do not use this word as a vague expression to denote a large sum; I mean real millions.

The Elector was indignant at this pillage, but still more so at the opposition which Villars offered to all his military designs. Villars only wanted to enrich himself, and rejected every plan which, by bringing him into touch with the enemy, would interfere with his gains. Moreover, far from

avoiding a quarrel with the Elector, it was his object to bring one on, since he had failed in his attempts to obtain the company of his wife. The King, wearied by his importunity, had consented to let her go to the army ; but it was necessary to obtain a pass for her through the army of Prince Louis of Baden, and he returned Villars' letter, opened, without a word in reply. He was furious at the ravages committed in his territory by Villars when he had refused her a pass on a former occasion. Villars was tormented by jealousy ; his one object was to have his wife with him ; successes on the Danube, in concert with the Elector, would do nothing to further this object ; so he deliberately acted in such a way as to make it impossible for that Prince to co-operate with him, and deprived him of all hope of further successes in Germany.

This strange situation made the Elector conceive the design of making an attempt on the Tyrol ; Villars, delighted to get rid of him and his troops, so as to have his own hands more free, approved of the project ; perhaps he had suggested it himself. The King agreed to it, and sent orders to Vendôme to advance on the Tyrol from the Italian side, and open communications with Bavaria by way of Trent. It would be easy to show how senseless this project was, and what opportunities were missed by the refusal of Villars to join the Elector and march into the heart of the Empire. But Providence had decreed that the blindness should then begin, which afterwards brought France to the very verge of the precipice.

The undertaking met with the success which might have been anticipated. The Elector and Vendôme found their progress continually arrested ; mountain passes had to be forced, small forts stormed ; and at each of these petty successes Vendôme sent off officers and couriers to the King ; but he only once succeeded in communicating with the Elector. Every one was already rejoicing over the prospect of the junction of the two armies, when news came that the Elector, who had taken Innspruck and advanced towards Brixen, had been forced to retreat from want of provisions. He retreated only just in time : twenty-four hours later he would have found the passes closed behind him : as it was he lost many men, and rejoined Marshal de Villars with his forces terribly diminished, and worn out by fatigue. Vendôme pushed on as far as

Trent, which he bombarded without doing much damage, and then retreated with some difficulty to Italy. Vaudemont, who had been left in charge of the main body, contrived to get Murcé beaten at the head of a considerable detachment, and then retired, on the pretext of ill-health, to take the waters at San-Benedetto. His conduct was always the same ; it is difficult to believe that he was not acting in concert with the enemy.

On Saturday, the 4th of August, the Duchess of Orleans gave birth to a son at Versailles ; the Duke of Orleans went to the King to ask him to do him the honour of standing godfather, and also that the infant might bear the name of Duke of Chartres. The King replied : " Is that all you ask ? " whereupon the Duke of Orleans said that his friends had urged him to ask something more, but that he thought it would be indiscreet under present circumstances. " Then I will anticipate your requests," said the King. " I grant your son the pension of First Prince of the Blood, 150,000 livres." That made up the income of the Duke of Orleans to 1,050,000 livres, without counting Madame's pensions.

A few days afterwards the King put up the offices of the artillery for sale, which brought in 5,000,000 livres. He left some of them at the disposal of M. du Maine, as Grand Master of Artillery ; increased his pay by 20,000 livres, and made him a present of 20,000 crowns.

About this time, M. d'Avaux sold to his nephew, the President des Mesmes, his office of Provost and Grand-Master of Ceremonies to the Order, having permission to continue to wear his blue ribbon. I have spoken several times of these sales of offices of the Order ; perhaps it may be as well to explain the matter, which is not altogether without interest, if only to account for the multiplication of blue ribbons which has been brought about by these sales of offices. When Henry III instituted the Order of the Holy Ghost, he created five offices of the Order : those of Grand Almoner, Chancellor, Provost, and Grand Master of Ceremonies, Grand Treasurer, and Registrar. These Grand Officers always wore the blue ribbon like the Knights of the Order, and were not to be distinguished from them except on the occasions of ceremonies of the Order, when there was a difference in their mantles. After a time these Grand Officers were allowed to sell their offices, and were

rarely refused permission by brevet to continue wearing the blue ribbon ; those who had received this brevet were known as “ veterans ” of the Order.

This, in itself, caused a multiplication of blue ribbons ; for the officers often sold their offices when they had held them only for a short time ; but that was not all, the custom gave rise to another abuse, even more absurd—besides these “ veterans,” another class came into existence, known as the *rapés* of the Order. This nickname is derived from the process of making wine ; after the juice has been pressed out of the grapes, water is poured on them, fermentation takes place, and a thin, sour liquor is produced which has something of the colour of wine ; this is known as *rapé* of wine. It will be seen that the comparison is just, and the name well applied. This is the plan which was devised by the Grand Officers of the Order. Peter, we will say, has held one of the offices of the Order for a few years ; he agrees to sell it to Paul. But there is a third party, John, who wishes to adorn himself with a blue ribbon without payment ; he induces Peter to make a fictitious sale of his office to himself ; is received into the office by the King, holds it for a few weeks, and then makes another fictitious sale to Paul, the real purchaser. Both Peter and John receive the usual brevet to wear the blue ribbon ; Peter is the “ veteran ” of the Order, and John the *rapé*. By means of this device it has happened that as many as sixteen “ veterans ” and *rapés* of the Order were all living at the same time.

This abuse reminds me of a story told me by the Maréchale de Chamilly, shortly after her husband became a Knight of the Order. He was at Mass one day, wearing his blue ribbon, when a good woman of the people, who was sitting behind his footmen, pulled one of them by the sleeve, and asked him whether that gentleman in the blue ribbon was really a Knight of the Order. The footman was so much surprised that this woman should know the difference that he told the story to his master when they came out of church.

The Swedes were taken in by this same M. d'Avaux, who had just sold his office to his nephew. When he was Ambassador in Sweden, they took him at first for a Knight of the Order, and paid him all sorts of honours. They found out afterwards that he was only a lawyer who held one of

the Grand Offices ; whereupon they no longer respected him, and ceased their attentions. This unfortunate discovery interfered considerably with the success of his mission.

The Duke of Burgundy crossed the Rhine, and on the 13th of August Brisach was invested. The defence was not very obstinate, and the place surrendered on the 6th of September. The Duke of Burgundy gained much credit by his assiduous attention to duty ; he showed a simple and natural courage ; he seemed insensible to danger, and Marchin, whom the King had attached to his person for this campaign, often remonstrated with him on the subject. He won the heart of the army by his courtesy and liberality, and by his attention to the wounded. When the siege was over he returned to the Court at Fontainebleau, much against his will, but in obedience to the reiterated orders of the King. It was carefully concealed from him that the campaign was not at an end. Marshal Tallard was meditating a design which would have been embarrassed by the presence of the heir-apparent ; since the King had set the example, it was considered that the first personages in the country should not be exposed to the chances of a battle, but only to the minor risks of sieges and encampments.

Portugal had deserted us, or rather, we had abandoned Portugal. A treaty had been concluded with that country by which we bound ourselves to furnish a naval force to protect it from the English. It was very essential to our interests that this treaty should be kept, for the Portuguese, if left to themselves, would be forced to open their ports to the enemy's fleet, and it was only on the side of Portugal that Spain could be invaded. But it was found impossible to supply the promised naval assistance ; the Allies forced the King of Portugal to give up his treaty with us, and sign one with them, and the effects of this treaty were such that Philip V was more than once in imminent danger of losing his crown.

Almost at the same time the treachery of the Duke of Savoy became manifest. Phélypeaux, the King's Ambassador at his Court, had sent repeated warnings, but had not been believed. Our Government trusted to the treaties concluded with the Duke, and were reassured by Vaudemont, who took care not to give his real opinion, as well

as by Vendôme, who, as usual, was taken in and full of self-confidence. Madame de Maintenon could not bring herself to believe in the guilt of the Duchess of Burgundy's father; Chamillart was led away by her, and was, moreover, deceived by the two Generals, while the King saw only through their eyes. At last, when too late, their eyes were opened; but, before relating the dangerous measures which had to be resorted to as a remedy, it is necessary to go back a little, and describe the great change which had taken place in Spain.

It will be remembered that the Princess des Ursins was ambitious of governing that country; she could only carry out her design by giving the Queen a taste for public affairs; she intended to avail herself of the King's passionate affection for his wife, and, while leaving him the outward show of monarchy, to transfer the real administration of affairs to the Queen; that is, to herself.

It was essential for the success of her design that she should have the support of our King, who, especially in the early days, had as much authority over the Court of Spain as over his own, and exercised great control over Spanish affairs. As soon as Madame des Ursins had made herself acquainted with the character of the King and Queen, she conceived this vast scheme, and completed the conquest of the Queen's affections which she had begun during the journey from Provence to Barcelona. She made use of the insolent behaviour of the Spanish ladies at the wedding-supper to make the Queen afraid of them; so that she looked upon Madame des Ursins as the only person whom she could trust, and gave herself up completely to her influence.

The Queen had been as carefully brought up and instructed as the Duchess of Burgundy, her sister. She was naturally clever, and, young as she was, her character was wise, firm, and consistent; she was capable of self-restraint and of making up her mind, and, as her character developed, she showed a courage and constancy under misfortune which were enhanced by her gentle and gracious manners. She was adored by the Spaniards; their loyalty and affection, to which alone Philip V owed the preservation of his crown, were entirely given to the Queen. They still adore her, and cannot mention her without tears; it is the same with all classes—nobles, ladies, the army, the people;

though so many years have gone by since they lost her, they have never been consoled for her death.

A character such as this, guided in the most confidential intimacy by a person like Madame des Ursins, was capable of great things. The Queen acted as Regent during her husband's absence in Italy; she had to preside over the Assembly of Aragon, and afterwards over the junta at Madrid; it was not seemly for her to sit alone among so many men, and Madame des Ursins accompanied her. In this way Madame des Ursins made herself acquainted with public business; she induced the Queen to be regular in her attendance at the junta, in order that she might go there herself. There were also some important matters which had, before they were brought before the junta, to be inquired into by two or three of the principal statesmen, Cardinal Portocarrero, Arias, and the Marquis de Rivas, formerly known as Ubilla; Madame des Ursins availed herself of the respect paid by the Spaniards to their young Sovereign, and their growing affection for her, to have these affairs also brought under the consideration of the Queen.

Madame des Ursins took care to gain the favour of our Court; by every ordinary mail she sent a detailed report of everything which concerned the Queen, and described her in the most favourable light possible. These reports were addressed to Madame de Maintenon, and reached the King through her; at the same time, Madame des Ursins also reported fully to the King of Spain in Italy; she encouraged the Queen to write to him regularly, and also to the Duchess of Burgundy, her sister. By degrees, Madame des Ursins began to speak of public affairs in her letters to Madame de Maintenon; as she was always with the Queen, she naturally heard all that was going on; in this way she accustomed the two Kings to seeing her express her opinion without making them suspect her of ambition or a desire to interfere. She gradually induced Madame de Maintenon to believe that, by availing herself of her local knowledge, and her influence over the Queen, she might herself govern Spain from Versailles as despotically as she governed France.

Madame de Maintenon's passion was to know everything and govern everything; she listened to the voice of the siren. This plan of governing Spain without Ministers

seemed to her a master-stroke, and she adopted it eagerly, not perceiving that Madame des Ursins would have all the real power. Hence arose the intimate and confidential alliance between these two important women, the boundless authority of Madame des Ursins, and the downfall of all the Spanish statesmen who had set Philip V on the throne. From this time the French Ministers were deprived of all influence in Spanish affairs, and our Ambassadors at Madrid became nonentities, for not one of them could maintain his position unless he abandoned himself without reserve to Madame des Ursins.

It was essential to the schemes of the two ladies that the mind of the King of Spain should be brought under their influence; this was rendered easy by his natural temperament and by the manner in which he had been brought up. His elder brother was lively, violent, impetuous, full of ability, but extremely self-willed and of an ungovernable temper; I say it the more freely because we shall see later on how his virtue triumphed over his evil disposition. It was necessary for the tranquillity of the State that the younger brother should be brought up in a state of subjection and dependence. His personal happiness was sacrificed to the interests of the kingdom; the growth of his mind was carefully stunted; as he was naturally quiet and gentle, he became, under this system, incapable of thinking for himself or of originating anything, though, when the choice of alternatives was laid before him, he had sufficient natural ability to choose the best; he could even express himself clearly and in good style when his mental slowness, not to say sloth, allowed him to speak at all. His intellect was still further cramped by the great piety which had been carefully instilled into him; he was incapable of exercising it with judgement and discernment. On the whole, therefore, he was a Prince who seemed made expressly to be governed by others.

To so many qualifications favourable to the designs of Madame des Ursins he joined another which was the result of the combination of piety with an ardent natural temperament. He could not do without the Queen; his health suffered considerably during his enforced absence from her. It may be readily supposed how much he loved her, and how strong her influence was over him. When he returned she was already initiated into public business, and under

the guidance of her clever and ambitious governess ; the King's presence at Madrid did not exclude her from the secrets of the administration. She no longer presided over the junta, but nothing was discussed there without her knowledge. The King soon shared her admiration and affection for the *camarera-major*, and did all he could to please her.

Soon the meetings of the junta became a mere formality ; all business was taken to the King direct, and he decided nothing without first consulting the Queen and Madame des Ursins. This conduct met with no disapproval from our Court ; Cardinals d'Estrées and Portocarrero complained of it, and our Ministers supported their complaints, but Madame de Maintenon laughed at them ; and the King, inspired by her, considered it a stroke of profound statesmanship to exalt the authority of the Queen of Spain as much as possible ; he thought that through her he would be able to govern the King his grandson more surely than by any other means.

Up to the time of Philip V's return from Italy, Louville had been his only confidant and adviser. His courage, wit, and vivacity, the easy gaiety with which he managed to amuse the King, whom he had known from childhood, and the confidential terms on which he was with our Ministers, made him too formidable to Madame des Ursins, and she determined to get rid of him. The Queen was already prejudiced against him, because by his advice the Duke of Savoy had been refused an arm-chair at his interview with the King of Spain. Harcourt poisoned the mind of Madame de Maintenon against him, representing him as a bold and capable man, entirely devoted to the interests of her enemies, the Duke de Beauvilliers and Torcy. Louville, therefore, after his return with the King to Madrid, found himself quietly pushed aside ; he was deprived of his quarters in the palace, and gradually lost all opportunities for seeing the King in private. The Queen never let the King go out of her own apartments, except sometimes to those of the *camarera-major*, which were next to them. There all public business was disposed of without the knowledge of the Ministers of either Court. Orry, who was entrusted with financial and commercial affairs, was the fourth member of this kind of Privy Council ; and nothing was ever decided on till it had been discussed between him and Madame des Ursins.

After a time the Council was increased by the admission of a fifth member, who was in every way a good match for Orry. His name was Aubigny; his father was a lawyer at Paris. He was a tall, handsome rascal; very active both in body and mind. He had lived for some years with Madame des Ursins on the ostensible footing of an equerry, and had acquired over her the authority usually exercised by those who supply the place of incompetent husbands. One afternoon Madame des Ursins wished to speak to Louville and the Duke of Medina-Celi, and in order that they might not be disturbed led the way into a room at the end of her suite of apartments. Aubigny was there, writing; not noticing that any one was following his mistress, he began swearing and asking her if she never meant to leave him in peace; he spoke to her in the most free and familiar terms, and with such impetuosity that everything came out before she could show him that they were not alone. All four were taken aback; Aubigny made his escape; Louville and the Duke spent a few minutes in looking round the room to give the *camarera-major* an opportunity of regaining her self-possession; after which they had their conference as if nothing had happened.

Aubigny was hand-in-glove with Orry, who enabled him to become rich. Very soon afterwards, in his capacity of equerry to Madame des Ursins, he was lodged in the palace; and where? In the very rooms which had formerly been occupied by the Infanta Maria-Theresa, afterwards the wife of Louis XIV; and, as they were not sufficient for this lord, some adjoining rooms were added to them! There were indeed some murmurs against such an innovation, but people had to submit to it. *Grandeos* of Spain, and every one else, had to bow the knee to this favourite.

At last Cardinal d'Estrées found his position as Ambassador unbearable, and asked to be recalled. All that our Ministers, and even the Noailles, who united with them on this occasion, could obtain was that the Abbé d'Estrées should remain at Madrid with the character of Ambassador. Madame des Ursins did not like it, but Madame de Maintenon agreed to this compromise in order not to show her partiality too openly; and indeed the Abbé, after the overthrow of the two Cardinals, was in no position to prevent everything being transacted by Madame des Ursins and herself, without the interference of Ambassador or Ministers. I say the two

Cardinals, because Portocarrero, after the recall of his colleague, gave up all share in public business, saying that he intended in future to attend only to his spiritual health and the affairs of his diocese. He found no obstacles in the way of his retirement. Don Manuel Arias resigned his office, and soon afterwards Rivas, the only remaining Minister, was politely dismissed.

Louville was ordered to return to France at the same time as Cardinal d'Estrées. The King of Spain was rather sorry, though he had ceased to see him in private. He gave Louville the government of Courtray, which he soon lost owing to the results of the war, and a considerable pension, which was not paid for very long. But Louville had laid aside about 100,000 livres, with which he set his affairs in order. He had the good sense to retain his cheerfulness, to forget all that he had been in Spain, and to amuse himself with his friends, who were numerous and distinguished. He built himself a very agreeable retreat at Louville.

The Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers had been endeavouring for some time to extricate their cousin Desmarets from his unpleasant position. Chamillart had been allowed to avail himself of his assistance in the Financial Department, but as it were, secretly, and without the King's knowledge; the King had indeed consented, but only on that condition. This state of things was very displeasing to the two Dukes; they had hoped that it would be a stepping-stone to Desmarets' restoration to favour, and to some acknowledged office in the Department of Finance. Chamillart, their intimate friend, and the most kind-hearted of men, asked the King to allow Desmarets to work under him openly, by his express orders. He was snubbed, but by dint of perseverance he at last obtained it. This first step taken, after an interval Chamillart ventured to propose that Desmarets should be presented to the King. This demand met with a very unfavourable reception; the King lost his temper; he said Desmarets was a thief, and had been declared to be one by his own uncle, Colbert, on his death-bed; he had already done too much in allowing him to serve at all; and if he were given any sort of standing in such a department as that of finance it would be found that he had not got rid of a propensity so useful to himself.

Chamillart could only hold his tongue; but after a time he represented to Madame de Maintenon how indecent it was

to employ a man publicly whom the King refused to see ; he pointed out that Desmarets' authority and credit were weakened by his disgrace, and public affairs suffered from it. He spoke highly of the assistance he received from him ; and at last he brought the King to consent, though much against his will, to receive Desmarets. Chamillart presented him to the King on the 19th of September, the day the King left for Sceaux, where he slept on his way to Fontainebleau. Nothing could be colder than the King's reception of Desmarets, whom he had not seen for twenty years. Chamillart was embarrassed by this marked repugnance, so unlike the King's ordinary gracious way of receiving any one whom he was willing to restore to favour, and dared go no further. Desmarets remained without any recognised office, but he was treated with more respect, and brought into more direct relations with the Controller-General. It soon appeared that the first step in a return to favour is the most important ; that once taken, the rest of the road is easy.

A month later Beauvilliers, Chevreuse, and Chamillart used their influence to such effect that Rouillé was made a supernumerary Councillor of State, and gave up his office of Director of Finances to Desmarets, receiving from the latter the 800,000 livres he had paid for the office, which was worth 80,000 livres a year, besides what might be made out of it in other ways. Armenonville, the other Director of Finances, was not altogether pleased at seeing this new star appear above the horizon ; he saw what the consequences might be, but he behaved like a prudent man and a courtier. He was a friend of mine, and Desmarets had been so from very old days, as I have explained elsewhere. Mutual jealousy, though kept within bounds, sometimes caused disputes between them. They knew how intimate I was with their common master, Chamillart, and they used to confide their differences to me ; I was often able to reconcile them without going to Chamillart. Fortune afterwards played some strange tricks with all three ; she seldom played a stranger one with humanity than when she made Desmarets' son a Knight of the Order and a Marshal of France !

While the Court was at Fontainebleau news arrived of the death of the Duke de Lesdiguières at Modena, after a short illness. The King felt his loss very acutely. He had distinguished himself greatly : he had been promoted to the

rank of Brigadier, and his bravery and zeal for his profession would have carried him far. He was a great loss to his family and to that of Marshal de Duras, which he had entered by his marriage. He was a man of gentle disposition, cheerful, and modest, though he never forgot who he was ; of ability he had just the quantity required to make a man popular and successful in our Court. He lived on very affectionate terms with his wife, who was much afflicted by his death. He was succeeded as Duke de Lesdiguières by old Canaples.

News was received almost at the same time of the death of St. Evremont, so well known by his wit, his writings, and his constant love for the Duchess de Mazarin, which kept him in England till he died in extreme old age. The cause of his disgrace is not so well known, and is sufficiently curious to find a place here. He had gone to the Pyrenees at the time of the conclusion of the treaty ; from thence he wrote a letter to his intimate friend, the Marshal de Créquy, in which he dissected the most hidden recesses of the heart of Cardinal Mazarin, and drew a very disadvantageous comparison between him and the Prime Minister of Spain. The letter abounded in wit and humour, which made its arguments all the more telling ; Don Louis de Haro would have made St. Evremont's fortune for writing it, but neither he nor the Cardinal ever knew anything about it to the day of his death.

When Fouquet was arrested, his friends Marshal de Créquy and Madame du Plessis-Bellièvre were arrested at the same time, and their papers seized. The Marshal (who had not yet attained that rank) was only banished for a short time, but the lady did not get off so easily. Among her papers were some belonging to Marshal de Créquy, including this letter of St. Evremont's, which he could never make up his mind to burn, and which is printed in St. Evremont's works. The Ministers to whom it was taken were alarmed at the discovery of so acute a censor ; M. Colbert plumed himself on his gratitude to his old master the Cardinal ; and, with the assistance of M. le Tellier, he worked on the King's sensitiveness to any criticism of his government, and his respect for the still recent memory of his late Minister. The King was angry, and caused St. Evremont to be sought for everywhere ; but he was warned in time and hid himself successfully. Tired of wandering

about, he escaped to England ; where he was welcomed by all the people most distinguished for birth, ability, or position. For a long time he tried in vain to obtain his pardon ; but leave to return to France was persistently refused. It was offered to him twenty or five-and-twenty years later, when he no longer cared about it. He had become naturalised in London ; he was madly in love with Madame de Mazarin, and thought it was not worth while to change his abode, his society, and all his habits at seventy-two years of age. He lived like a philosopher for more than twenty years afterwards, in good health and retaining the vigour of his mind ; his society was much sought after to the last.

About this time the Archduke Charles was declared King of Spain by the Emperor, who made no secret of his intention to invade Spain on the side of Portugal. A great change had taken place at the Court of Vienna : Count Mansfeldt had been dismissed from the Presidency of the Council of War, and had been replaced by Prince Eugène. The latter was detained at Vienna longer than he wished owing to the revolt in Hungary under the leadership of Prince Ragotzi. The forces of the insurgents were steadily increasing ; they captured many small towns and castles, and caused considerable alarm in Vienna itself. They were much encouraged by the threatening attitude of the Turks, who were preparing for war against the Emperor.

On the 20th of September a victory was gained over the Imperialists at Hochstädt by d'Usson, who was joined during the battle by Marshal de Villars and the Elector of Bavaria. The enemy left 4,000 men on the field, and lost thirty-three guns, with many standards. This great success only cost us about 1,000 men ; Villars wrote word that he did not think the beaten army would be able to take the field again during the campaign, and that the Elector was about to march against Prince Louis of Baden, who was at Augsburg with 20,000 men.

There could no longer be any doubt of the treachery of the Duke of Savoy, nor that he had concealed emissaries from the Emperor in his Court. The King twice expressed his suspicions to the Piedmontese Ambassador, but whether that Minister was acting in good faith or in collusion with his master, he replied that he would answer with his head for the Duke's fidelity to his treaties. At last it was determined

to disarm the auxiliaries from Savoy who were serving in our army, and measures were taken so secretly and effectually that it was carried out without resistance. There should have been 5,000 of them, but the Duke had by degrees made more than half of them desert. This action caused a great stir throughout Europe. News being received that the Duke of Savoy had placed Phélypeaux and the Spanish Ambassador under arrest, with a guard over their houses, Du Libois was ordered to take up his quarters in the house of the Piedmontese Ambassador, and accompany him everywhere. This is the usual custom in case of a rupture of diplomatic intercourse; the person placed in the Ambassador's house is a sort of honourable spy, who reports everything that goes on, eats with the Ambassador, and hardly lets him out of his sight. However inconvenient, not to say intolerable, such enforced companionship may be, Phélypeaux did not get off so cheaply. He was a very witty and well-read man, with a natural gift of eloquence, very haughty and sarcastic. He was subjected to strange barbarities, being almost deprived of food, threatened with a dungeon, and even with death. He remained imperturbable, and drove the Duke of Savoy almost mad by his firm and haughty demeanour, and his contemptuous irony. He wrote a very amusing and instructive account of his imprisonment. Tessé left Fontainebleau with orders to assume command of the forces in Dauphiné and begin the new war by invading Savoy.

In the meantime Tallard had laid siege to Landau; the trenches were opened on the 18th of October. There was nothing to interfere with the enterprise, for Count Stirum's army had been destroyed at the battle of Höchstädt, and that of Prince Louis, which was in bad condition, was watching the movements of the Elector. It was unfortunate that his quarrels with Villars prevented the Elector from taking advantage of his opportunities on the Danube; there was no army there to oppose him, and he might have carried the war into the hereditary dominions of the Emperor, who was reduced to great extremities and could see from Vienna the conflagrations caused by the insurgents under Ragotzi. But Villars, thinking only of his private fortune, continued to cross the Elector in everything: it came to such a pitch that he never went near him if he could help it, and treated him with intolerable haughtiness and affected suspicion.

At last the Elector called together the principal officers of his army, and in their presence asked Villars whether he had the King's orders for behaving as he did, or whether he was doing it on his own account. The Marshal had not a word to say ; and the Elector then wrote formally to demand the recall of a man who treated him with insolence, interfered with all his military plans, and seemed to have come into his country merely to plunder it for his own private profit. The King saw that it was useless to leave the two men together ; recalled Villars, and determined to create his successor a Marshal of France, as none of the existing Marshals were available. That at least was the reason given, but it was in reality a pretext.

Chamillart and his father, while Intendants at Rouen, had, as we have already seen, become intimate friends of the Mattignons ; the Count de Mattignon had earned their gratitude by relieving their land from some feudal obligations to himself. The Mattignons were a numerous family, and had been obliged to let their sisters marry as best they could. One of them married Coigny.

This Coigny's father was one of those petty judges of Lower Normandy, whose name was Guillot ; he was the son of a peasant, and had obtained this petty office in order to be exempted from the poll-tax. The son had become a soldier, and the sword had made him a sort of gentleman. He thought it a great piece of good fortune to marry Mademoiselle de Mattignon without a dowry ; and, having bought some fine estates and the governorship of Caen, became quite a different sort of man. He was a good officer, and rose to the rank of Lieutenant-General. He lived on very intimate terms with his brothers-in-law ; they liked him, and were fond of their sister, who was a woman of merit. Coigny grew tired of his name of Guillot ; he had bought the fine estate of Franquetot, which had belonged to a wealthy and ancient family of that name, lately extinct. He thought he would like to assume their name ; there was no one to oppose him, so he obtained letters-patent authorising him to take the name of Franquetot in place of Guillot, and had them registered by the Parliament of Rouen. In this way he secured his new name to his most remote posterity. Searchers into registers are less to be feared than the world in general, which finds the name of Guillot ridiculous, whereas it takes persons of the name of Fran-

quetot to be of good nobility, because there was an ancient family of that name ; and does not know that they are merely grafted on to it with parchment and sealing-wax.

So Coigny, having become a Franquetot and risen to high military rank, shared with the Mattignons the favour of Chamillart, and he it was who was selected as Villars' successor. He was then in Flanders, commanding a small detached corps ; he was told that he was to go to Bavaria ; but, as the promotion to the rank of Marshal was only to be declared on his arrival there, Chamillart did not venture to tell him the secret. He did, however, as he afterwards told me himself in the bitterness of his heart, give him such strong hints that he could not do more without telling him in so many words. But Coigny was a dull man ; he could not understand what was meant ; he liked his present position, and going to Bavaria seemed to him like being ordered to China. He refused flatly, to the despair of his patron, and to his own, when he found out afterwards what he had missed.

On Coigny's refusal, a courier was sent to Marchin, who was then conducting the siege of Landau, bearing a parcel ; in it was enclosed another, which he was not to open till he arrived in Bavaria ; Marchin felt it, and became aware that it contained a Marshal's bâton. Strange to say, he was not tempted by it ; he was hurt at receiving it merely because his services were required after being omitted from the late promotion ; moreover, he was afraid of the responsibility. He begged to be excused, and returned the enclosed packet unopened. But the King insisted, and sent back the packet with the same orders ; Marchin had to obey, and set out for Bavaria. On his way through Switzerland he met Villars, carrying off his treasures. The Elector proclaimed openly that he had plundered Bavaria of over 2,000,000 livres, besides what he had extracted from the enemy's country. The escort which had brought him returned with Marchin, who had with him 100,000 pistoles for the Elector, besides a great sum of money for the payment of our own troops. His arrival restored harmony to the armies ; he acted in concert with the Elector, and abstained from any kind of pillage. Soon afterwards they besieged and took Augsburg, after which the armies went into winter-quarters. Marshal de Boulliers returned to Court,

and Marshal de Villeroy took his place in Flanders, where he was to command during the winter.

Landau held out obstinately, and the enemy were making great preparations to relieve it. The eldest son of the Landgrave of Hesse, who afterwards became King of Sweden, advanced with twenty-three battalions and thirty squadrons of his father's army to raise the siege. Tallard marched to meet him, and on the 15th of November attacked him near Spire. The Prince of Hesse was completely defeated; he lost 6,000 men killed and wounded, besides 4,000 prisoners, all his guns, and nearly all his colours. This great news arrived at Versailles on the 20th; the King at once sent word to Monseigneur, who was at the Opera at Paris; he caused the performance to be interrupted in order to announce the victory to the audience.

It was at this battle that Beaumanoir was killed, as I have already related, who had married the daughter of the Duke de Noailles in defiance of his father's dying injunctions; with him ended his ancient and illustrious family. We also lost Pracontal, Lieutenant-General, a man of great courage and capacity. The Duke of Burgundy was much distressed at not having been allowed to remain with the army till the end of the campaign; he had been made to believe that it was over after the capture of Brisach. Landau capitulated on honourable terms immediately after the battle of Spire; and the army of the Rhine went into winter-quarters.

Tessé was at Chambéry, having taken possession of nearly the whole of Savoy. M. de Vaudemont, foreseeing the difficulties which would arise from the defection of the Duke of Savoy, had resigned his command on the plea of ill-health, an excuse which he found useful on many occasions, and retired to Milan to await events. Tessé, his friend, not to say his client, was ordered to take over the command of his army at the proper time.

M. de Vendôme, before assuming the command-in-chief in Italy, had urged the King to make him a Marshal of France; but the King, struck by the likeness of his position to that of his own illegitimate sons, replied that the Marshal's bâton was not suitable for him, but that he should not be in a worse position by not having it. After a time, M. de Vendôme reminded the King of this promise and asked, in the first instance, for a patent authorising him to command all Marshals of France, and then, as a compromise, that he

should command those who were junior to himself as Lieutenant-Generals. However plausible this proposal might be, the King hesitated to give him authority over any Marshal; he spoke to Marshal de Villeroy about it, who protested strongly, and caused the other Marshals to do so; with the result that Vendôme was refused.

Tessé knew all about it, but he did not wish to incur the hostility of the bastards. Like a clever courtier, before leaving for Dauphiné he suggested to the King that he had better avoid finding himself in the same place with M. de Vendôme, and merely assume the command of the smaller army, which had been for a time under the Grand Prior. The King replied, in so many words, that these gentlemen¹ must be taught not to be so fastidious; they had been too much spoilt already, he said, and he was determined not to spoil them further; he had been much displeased by M. de Vendôme's presumptuous request, and Tessé was not to consider him in any way, but to take command of the principal army if necessary, and think only of what was best for the service. Tessé told me this himself more than once. He was very much surprised; but, in spite of what the King had said, he was too clever to fall out with M. de Vendôme, and, consequently, with M. du Maine. Vendôme on his part abstained from putting forward any pretensions, but contrived to arrange matters so as not to be cast into the shade by Tessé. As for M. de Vaudemont, who was Governor-General of the Milanese by a patent from the King of Spain, he neither obeyed the Marshals of France nor claimed any right to command them.

The departure of Tessé for Italy was the signal for a prodigious demonstration of Chamillart's influence. I have several times had occasion to mention the bad conduct of La Feuillade, and the King's dislike to him. We have seen how unwillingly the King consented to his marriage with Chamillart's daughter, and how he declared that he was determined never to show him any favour. Chamillart, supported by his all-powerful patroness, and by the weakness which the King had for all his Ministers, and for this one more than for any except, perhaps, Cardinal Mazarin, got round him so well that the command of the troops in Dauphiné was given to La Feuillade. The pretext was that he was already Governor of that province. Three

¹ Illegitimate scions of the royal family.

months before he had been a Colonel on the retired list ; he was then made a *maréchal-de-camp*, and was now suddenly promoted to be commander-in-chief in two frontier provinces, with a whole army corps under him. The Court and the army were extremely surprised, and the principal Generals much mortified. La Feuillade took Annecy after a few cannon-shots, and cleared away some small posts of the enemy which Tessé had purposely left undisturbed, in order to pay his court to the Minister. As may be supposed, these trifling successes were made the most of ; Chamillart was delighted with his son-in-law, and La Feuillade, when he started for his command, was almost bursting with pride.

The Count de Toulouse and Marshal de Cœuvres returned ; they had remained a long time in harbour at Toulon, their forces being insufficient to meet the English and Dutch. When the hostile fleets retired they put out for a cruise, during which the Count took command, not as a bastard commanding a Marshal of France, but as Admiral of France, and therefore senior to him. But he was nevertheless very properly forbidden by the King to do anything without the Marshal's advice.

Villars also arrived at Marly while the Court was there ; the King gave him a favourable reception, and even made a polite apology for not being able to give him quarters there. He bore himself with his usual boldness, and had the audacity, when making his report to the King and Madame de Maintenon, to touch on the ticklish subject of the contributions he had exacted. He took care to say nothing about Bavaria ; he confessed that he had helped himself a little at the expense of the enemy, but, he said, he knew the King was too kind a master to wish his officers to be ruined in his service, and he looked upon what he had gained as a pecuniary reward which had cost His Majesty nothing. This effrontery passed off with a gracious smile from Madame de Maintenon ; and his indecent quarrels with the Elector of Bavaria, which had been so fatal to success, were not mentioned at all.

A few days later Tallard, whose hands were cleaner, paid his respects to the King with more modesty. The King received him as he deserved, talked to him a little before the meeting of the Council, and then put him off till next day, when he was to come to Madame de Maintenon's room.

Cardinal d'Estrées arrived almost at the same time ; the King embraced him twice, and gave him a most kind reception. A few days later Louville also arrived at Paris, and I had several long conversations with him.

As the Portuguese frontier of Spain was about to become a seat of war, the King resolved to send an army corps there to assist the Spaniards ; the Duke of Berwick was chosen to command it, with Puységur as second in command. The latter was a gentleman of Soissonais, of a very good and ancient family. He had been Quartermaster-General in M. de Luxembourg's army during his last campaign in Flanders, and had shown great capacity and vigilance, in addition to a modest simplicity which never left him, whatever position he held. It did not prevent him, however, from speaking his mind on all occasions, regardless of consequences, even to the King himself, who had a great esteem for him. He ventured to differ from Marshal de Villeroy and M. de Vendôme, when at the height of their favour, and proved that he was right. Long afterwards he became a Marshal of France, and a Knight of the Order, amidst general applause.

In the meantime, Madame des Ursins, to allay the excitement caused by the retirement of the two Cardinals and the expulsion of all the old Ministers who had set the crown on the head of Philip V, instituted a sort of new junta. It consisted of Don Manuel Arias, Governor of the Council of Castile, the Marquis de Mansera, and the Abbé d'Estrées, as French Ambassador. She kept up this new Council as long as she thought necessary, as a concession to public opinion ; but she took care that nothing of real importance should be brought before it. All serious affairs were discussed between the King and Queen and herself, sometimes with the assistance of Orry. Arias was the only member of the new Council who caused her any embarrassment, by his capacity and influence ; she cared nothing for the Abbé d'Estrées, after having got rid of his uncle. He was a good-looking man, given to gallantry, of very moderate capacity ; ridiculously vain of himself, his talents, and the splendour of his family ; an honourable man, however, and anxious to carry out his duties well, but always falling into mistakes and making himself ridiculous. His morals had excluded him from the episcopate ; to make up for it the influence of his family, especi-

ally of his uncle the Cardinal, procured him some diplomatic employments which he liked to persuade people were of importance, but in which there was, in reality, little or nothing for him to do. Mansera's great age prevented him from being formidable to Madame des Ursins. We shall soon see how she contrived to get rid of this simulacrum of a Council.

About the same time the King of Spain established four companies of Bodyguards on the model of ours; two of them were Spanish, one Italian, and one Flemish or Walloon. This novelty caused great excitement at Madrid, where innovations are not popular; to make it pass more easily the command of the four companies was given to the most distinguished noblemen of their respective countries. Up to this time the Kings of Spain had never had any guards except a few ragged lancers who used to beg for alms from every one who entered the palace; and a company of halberdiers, like our King's Swiss Guard. The latter company was retained, but the lancers were disbanded.

The Duke of Alba was appointed Ambassador to France. His father, who died in 1701, was a most extraordinary man, though full of capacity. When Philip V entered Madrid he expressed great delight, and indulged in many sarcastic remarks about the House of Austria and its adherents. Louville was asked to go and see him at Madrid; he found him in a rather dirty bed, lying on his right side; he had not stirred from this position, nor allowed his bed to be made, for several months; though perfectly well, he declared he could not move. The fact was, he kept a mistress, who had got tired of him and run away. He was in despair, searched for her all over Spain, and had Masses sung and prayers offered for her return; so enlightened is the religion of countries where the Inquisition is in force! At last he made a vow to lie in bed, on his right side, without moving, till she came back. He confessed this folly to Louville with perfect gravity, as the most reasonable thing in the world, and the most likely to restore his mistress. He persevered in it till he died.

His son, the Duke of Alba, who was now appointed Ambassador, was a rather mean-looking man, but well-informed, and of great capacity; very wise and cautious, with much dignified politeness. During the most unfortunate times he exercised his functions with much judgement

and courage, to the satisfaction of his Court, and of our own, where he was much esteemed and respected. His wife, a sister of the Dukes of Arcos and Banos, was very lively, and extremely ugly ; she afforded our Court some amusement at first, but people became accustomed to her. They met with an extraordinarily gracious reception from the King ; it gave general satisfaction, for Harcourt had several times written from Spain testifying to the Duke of Alba's devotion to French interests.

CHAPTER IX

1703

A strange marriage—Death of Courtin—He intercedes for the Duchess of Portsmouth—An adventure with robbers—Fieubet dies of boredom—A dispute about collections in church becomes a serious affair—The King's displeasure—I am threatened with a storm—I determine to ask for an audience—Satisfactory result of my explanation—I reproach the Duke de Chevreuse for his timidity—Successes of the malcontents in Hungary—Troubles with the fanatics in Languedoc.

M. DE BEAUVILLIERS had two sons, both very young; his daughters had all taken the veil at the convent of Montargis, except one; and towards the end of the year he married this one to the Duke de Mortemart, a man whose character and morals were not such as to qualify him to become his son-in-law. His mother was the younger sister of the Duchesses de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers, and M. de Beauvilliers' wish to avoid bringing a stranger into his family had something to do with making up this match; but it was finally determined by a stronger reason. The Duchess de Mortemart, when quite young and rather attractive, fond of society, and taking part in all the amusements of the Court, had suddenly given up the world, being annoyed at the scolding of her sisters, and betaken herself to a life of solitude and devotion. It became too much for her; nevertheless she persevered. She was captivated by Madame Guyon and the Archbishop of Cambrai, and became intimate with all that little select flock; in this way she found many pious amusements to occupy her time. But the most substantial result for her was this marriage for her son. The Archbishop's judgment was led astray by his wish to unite more closely this little persecuted band, in which the Duchess de Mortemart was one of the choicest spirits. The marriage was arranged with his approval, in spite of objections which were visible enough to every one else. Under such auspices M. and Madame de Beauvilliers, who, in the midst of the Court

and of public affairs, never lost sight of the presence of God, and who, from a worldly point of view, had their choice of the most brilliant alliances in France, selected as their son-in-law a man who delighted in parading his atheism, who never attempted to put any constraint on his low habits, either before or after his marriage, and who drank and gambled away all he had, and more. Every one was astonished at such an extraordinary choice; the marriage turned out as might have been anticipated. I shall have more than one occasion to mention this Duke de Mortemart, who was the tormentor of his family and of himself.

About the same time Pontchartrain arranged a marriage between one of his brothers-in-law, a naval Captain, and the only daughter of Du Casse, who was supposed to have a fortune of 1,200,000 livres. Du Casse came from Bayonne, where his father and brother sold hams. He took to filibustering, in which trade he acquired wealth and a good deal of experience, and was deservedly made an officer in the King's Navy; he soon rose to the rank of Captain. He was a very brave man, and much liked in the Navy on account of his liberality and modesty. He had a furious quarrel with Pointis, when the latter took and pillaged Carthagenæ. Pontchartrain took the opportunity to purchase for his brother-in-law, with Du Casse's money, the office of Lieutenant-General of the galleys, which carries with it the rank of Lieutenant-General; it had become vacant by the death of the Bailly de Noailles, and hitherto had not found a purchaser.

The Duke of Mantua lost his wife, who belonged by birth to a younger branch of his own family; she was a person of singular virtue and merit, who had to suffer a good deal from his whims and avarice, and from a seraglio which he kept all his life. He had no children by her, and at once turned his thoughts to a second marriage with a Frenchwoman. I shall have to relate the affair before long.

La Rongère, Chevalier of Honour to Madame, and a Knight of the Order on her recommendation, died about this time. He was a gentleman of Maine, of very good family, though his family name was ridiculous; it was Quatre-Barbes. He was a very honourable man; his wits were dull, but his face and figure would have made his fortune on the stage in the character of a hero or a god.

Courtin followed him a few days later. He was a very little man, who seemed to have formerly been good-looking; he had been very gallant. He was very clever and witty, with a great air of fashion and good society; he had always lived in the best circles, but he was not in the least conceited, and never presumed. He was employed in several diplomatic missions in which he was quite successful, and was for a long time a most useful Ambassador in England. He made Charles II do anything he pleased, by means of the Duchess of Portsmouth; and he afterwards had an opportunity of repaying her services.

When she returned to France after the death of Charles II she was not treated with much consideration, on account of the life she led at Paris. The King heard that persons at her house had spoken very freely concerning himself and Madame de Maintenon, and that she herself had done so; whereupon M. de Louvois was ordered to send her a *lettre de cachet*, banishing her to a considerable distance. Courtin was an intimate friend of Louvois, and used to go freely into his private room at any hour. One evening he went in there; Louvois was writing, and did not disturb himself. Courtin saw the *lettre de cachet* lying on his table, and when Louvois had finished his writing, asked him, with some emotion, what it meant. Louvois told him the reason for it; Courtin replied that some slanderer must have been at work, but that, even if the report were true, the King had received such services from the Duchess that it would be shameful to forget them. He begged Louvois to tell the King so from him, and in case the King had forgotten the circumstances, he asked him to look at his despatches from England and see what important advantages he had obtained during the Dutch war through her influence. Louvois did so; the King remembered what had happened, and threw the *lettre de cachet* into the fire, merely sending the Duchess of Portsmouth a warning to be more careful in future.

Courtin had received permission to appear in the King's presence, and in all places, with a stick, and wearing bands, but without a mantle. Pelletier de Souci had leave to do the same, and they were the only men of the gown to whom such licence was permitted, except the Ministers. Indeed, it was only quite of late years that Secretaries of State took to dressing like the other courtiers, though in quieter

colours and with less lace, and Chamillart did not adopt the grey coat with plain gold buttons till after he became Secretary of State. The only Controller-General who ever wore the grey coat with gold buttons and a cravat was Desmarets, quite at the end of the King's life. Pomponne wore them, but then he had been Secretary of State for a long time. Up to the time of the King's death no parliament man ever appeared at Court without his gown, nor Counsellors without their mantles ; magistrates and lawyers always wore their mantles at Paris, and many of the parliament men always wore their gowns. M. d'Avaux alone, after he came back from his diplomatic mission, retained his sword and cravat ; people laughed at him, and the Chancellor and other friends spoke to him about it. The King also laughed at him, but he took pity on his little weakness and would not tell him to go back to his mantle and bands. The poor man, with his office of the Order, and his blue ribbon, hoped to pass himself off as a Knight of the Order, and thought his ridiculous attire distinguished him from other men of the gown.

I cannot leave the subject of Courtin without relating his funny adventure with Fieubet, another very able and witty lawyer, who was received into the best society of the Court. They were driving together to St. Germain, at a time when there were a good many highway robberies. They were stopped, and Fieubet was robbed of a considerable sum. When the thieves had left them, Courtin began boasting that he had saved his watch and fifty pistoles, which he had contrived to slip away. Fieubet immediately put his head out of the window and called out to the robbers to come back. "Gentlemen," he said, "you do not seem to be bad sort of people in your way ; it is not fair that you should be taken in by this gentleman ; he has cheated you out of his watch and fifty pistoles !" Then, turning to Courtin, he said : "You told me so, you know ; take my advice, and give them up with a good grace !" Courtin's astonishment and indignation were such that he let himself be robbed without a word ; but when the thieves had once more retired, he tried to strangle Fieubet, who was the stronger of the two, and only laughed at him. He told the story to everybody, and their friends had great difficulty in reconciling them.

Fieubet had died long before Courtin. He was a man

with much ambition ; conscious of great talents, he longed for some office of distinction, and never could attain to one. Disappointment, advancing years, and the death of his wife made him go into retirement at the monastery of the Camaldules of Gros-Bois. Pontchartrain sent his son to see him, and he rather indiscreetly asked him what he did there. "What am I doing?" said Ficubet; "I am being bored; it is my penance; I have had too much fun in my life." He was so thoroughly bored that he was attacked by jaundice, and died of *ennui* in a very few years.

The year ended with an affair which affected me considerably. There were certain festivals of the Church when the King attended High Mass and Vespers, and on these occasions a lady of the Court always took the bag round to collect alms for the poor. When there was no Queen, the Dauphiness used to nominate the lady who was to do it; and, in the interval when there was no Dauphiness, Madame de Maintenon nominated her. The ladies of the House of Lorraine, and, following their example, ladies of other families to which the King had given princely rank, contrived by degrees to avoid making the collection, in order to put themselves on the same footing as the Princesses of the Blood. It was some time before the manœuvre was noticed; but at last the Duchess de Noailles, her daughter the Duchess de Guiche, and the Maréchale de Boufflers perceived what was going on, and spoke to me about it, among others. As soon as I heard that the Princesses were trying to steal a march upon us by avoiding the collection, I made up my mind that the Duchesses should be as clever as they were, until some opportunity should arise for settling the question. The Duchess de Noailles spoke to Madame du Lude about it, but she, being timid and easy-going, merely shrugged her shoulders; at last, however, she consented to tell the Duchess of Burgundy.

The Duchess of Burgundy saw the matter in its proper light, and, wishing to see what the Princesses would do, took the first opportunity to nominate Madame de Montbazon, the daughter of M. de Bouillon, a beautiful young woman, often at Court, and a very proper person on whom to try the experiment. She was at Paris, for they always went there purposely when these festivals were approach-

ing. She declined on the plea of ill-health, though perfectly well; she retired to bed for half a day and then went about as usual. That was sufficient to make their designs evident, but nothing more came of it for the time; the Duchess of Burgundy, though she was annoyed, did not like to go any further. The result was that no Duchess would make the collection; the ladies of quality below them in rank perceived it, and began to avoid it also, so that it fell into all sorts of hands, and sometimes nobody could be found to make the collection at all.

Things went so far that the King became angry, and on one occasion was on the point of telling the Duchess of Burgundy to make the collection herself. I was warned of it by the Ladies of the Palace, who tried to persuade us not to go to Paris before the festival, telling me that a storm was gathering over my head. I had been in disgrace ever since I left the service; I was never asked to Marly, and was still in the situation which I have described elsewhere; these ladies held out hopes that I might escape from it if I would remain for the festival. I agreed to do so provided that I could be assured that my wife would not be nominated for the collection; as I could obtain no guarantee on that point, we went off to Paris. The Maréchale de Cœuvres, as wife of a Grandee of Spain, always refused to make the collection, and her mother, the Duchess de Noailles, used to make the Countess d'Ayen, her daughter-in-law, do it in her place. On another occasion Chamillart's daughters, the Duchesses de La Feuillade and de Lorge, who had not been able to avoid remaining at Versailles, were nominated, and both refused. That made the shell burst.

The King, annoyed by all these manœuvres, ordered the Grand Equerry to tell his daughter to make the collection on New Year's Day; and he was quite ready to make a virtue of necessity, and pay his court at other people's expense. He had not forgiven me for the apology which the Princess d'Harcourt had to make to the Duchess de Rohan. Next day I was warned by Madame de Roucy, who had heard it from the Duchess of Burgundy, that the King had gone into Madame de Maintenon's room looking very serious, and had said angrily that he was much displeased with the Dukes; they showed less respect for him than the Princes; the Duchesses refused to make the col-

lection, whereas, when he had proposed to the Grand Equerry that his daughter should do it, he had consented at once. He added that there were two or three Dukes in particular whom he would always remember. The Duchess of Burgundy had not told Madame de Roucy who they were, but she had whispered the names to Madame Dangeau, who sent me word to be prudent, for there was a storm brewing. This warning was given me in the presence of the Chancellor, and neither of us doubted that I was one of the three Dukes mentioned. The same evening Madame Chamillart told me that the King had spoken very sharply to her husband. They both knew all about the affair; and they had themselves made the two Duchesses, their daughters, refuse to make the collection.

Next morning, very early, I saw Chamillart. He told me that when he went to Madame de Maintenon's room on the previous evening, before he had time to open his bag, the King had asked him angrily what he thought of the Dukes, who were more disobedient than the Princes, and immediately added that Mademoiselle d'Armagnac was going to make the collection. Chamillart replied, that as such matters did not concern his office, he had only learnt it the evening before; but he thought the Dukes were very unlucky in having incurred his anger because they had not divined his wishes; they would have been as ready to please him as the Princes if he had said as much to them as he had said to the Grand Equerry. The King, without noticing this answer, went on to say that ever since I had left the service I had done nothing but study questions of rank and precedence, and dispute with people about them; that I was the originator of this squabble, and that he would do well if he sent me to such a distance that I should give him no more trouble for a long time. Chamillart replied that, if I studied such questions more than other people it was because I had more ability and knew more about them; that, as my dignity had its origin in the favour of Kings, His Majesty ought to thank me for maintaining it properly. Then, to calm the King, he added with a smile that every one knew that His Majesty could send people wherever he pleased, but it was hardly worth while to send them away when he could, with a single word, make them do what he liked.

The King, by no means appeased, told Chamillart that

what annoyed him more than anything was the refusal of his daughters, especially the younger, apparently at my instigation. To this Chamillart replied that one of his sons-in-law was absent, and that the other had only made his wife do what other Duchesses did. The King was still angry, and, after a little more grumbling, proceeded to transact business. After I had thanked Chamillart for speaking so well on behalf of the Dukes, and of myself in particular, he advised me to take the very earliest opportunity of speaking to the King, first on the subject of the collection and the Dukes generally, and then about myself; and he gave me an outline of what he thought I had better say. The King's remarks to him were the fruit of a long interview which he had with the Grand Equerry.

After leaving Chamillart I went to tell the Chancellor what I had heard. He was of the same opinion, that I ought to speak to the King as soon as possible, for delay would only make his anger more obstinate; so I had better take my chance, and ask him to give me an interview in his private room. If, as I feared, he stopped and drew himself up to listen to me on the spot, the Chancellor advised me to say that I saw His Majesty would not do me the favour of hearing me at that moment, but I hoped it would be for another time; and retire at once. It was no light thing for a young man, so thoroughly out of favour with the King, to go up to him and ask abruptly for an interview. As a rule, I did nothing without the advice of M. de Beauvilliers, but Madame de Saint-Simon was of opinion that I had better not ask it on this occasion. She felt sure that he would advise me to write instead of speaking to the King, and a letter would not produce the same effect on his mind, besides that it could not reply to anything he said; moreover, I should be embarrassed if I received different advice from the three Ministers. I thought she was right; and I went to await the King's passage to his private room after his dinner. I asked permission to follow him; he made no reply, but signed to me to come in, and placed himself in the embrasure of a window.

As I was about to speak, Fagon and other members of the household passed through the room; I said not a word till I was alone with the King. Then I told him that I had heard that he was displeased with my conduct about

the collection ; that my desire to please him was so great that I could not help asking his permission to explain what I had done. On hearing this he assumed a look of severity, and answered not a word. " It is true, Sir," I continued, " that since the Princesses refused to make the collection I have caused Madame de Saint-Simon to avoid making it ; I have wished other Duchesses to do the same, and I have even prevented some of them from making it, because I did not think your Majesty wished them to do so." " But," interrupted the King, in the tone of an angry master, " to refuse the Duchess of Burgundy is to treat her disrespectfully ; it is equivalent to refusing myself."

I replied that, from the manner in which the ladies were nominated to make the collection, we did not think the Duchess of Burgundy had anything to do with it ; that it was the Duchess du Lude, or some Lady of the Palace, who nominated any one she pleased. " But," interrupted the King, in the same haughty and angry manner, " you have been making speeches." " No, Sir," I said, " I have made none." " What, you have not been talking ? " and he was going on in a loud voice, when I ventured to interrupt him in my turn, and, raising my voice above his : " No, Sir," I said, " I have made no speeches ; if I had I would confess it to your Majesty, just as I have confessed what caused my wife to avoid making the collection, and prevented other Duchesses from doing so. I have always thought, and had good reason for thinking, that, since your Majesty said nothing on the subject, you did not know what was going on ; or that, if you did know it, you considered it of no importance. But I beg you most earnestly, Sir, to believe that if I, or any other Duke, had thought for a moment that it was your Majesty's wish, all the Duchesses would have been eager to make the collection at every festival, and Madame de Saint-Simon with them ; and, if that was not enough to show my desire to please you, I would have made the collection myself in a dish, like a village sexton. Sir," I continued, " how can your Majesty imagine that in your presence we should consider any function beneath us—a function, too, which both Duchesses and Princesses discharge every day in the convents and parish churches of Paris, without making any difficulty ? But it is true, Sir, that the Princes are so ready to encroach upon our privileges in everything that we are

obliged to be on our guard, especially when they had once refused to make the collection."

"But they have not refused," said the King, in a milder tone; "they were not told to make it." "They have refused, Sir," I replied firmly; "not the ladies of the Lorraine family, but others" (by which I meant to remind him of Madame de Montbazou). "The Duchess du Lude ought to have told you so; and that is why we acted as we did; but, as we know how much your Majesty dislikes discussion on such points, or having to decide them, we thought it sufficient to prevent the encroachment of the Princes by avoiding making the collection ourselves, being persuaded, as I have had the honour of saying already, that your Majesty knew nothing, or cared nothing, about the matter." "Oh, well!" said the King, in a lower and much milder manner, "it will not occur again, for I have told the Grand Equerry that I wished his daughter to make the collection on New Year's Day, and I am glad that she should set the example, on account of my friendship for her father." I replied, keeping my eyes still fixed steadily on the King, that I begged him, once for all, on behalf of myself and all the other Dukes, to believe that he had no more obedient servants than ourselves; that we all felt, and I more than any, that our dignities emanated from his own, and that personally we were loaded with his favours; that, consequently, he was, as our King and benefactor, the absolute master of our dignities, to raise or lower them, and to deal with them in every way as he thought fit.

The King then assumed an air of kindness and familiarity, and told me several times, in a thoroughly gracious tone, that that was the right way to think and speak, with other polite speeches of the sort. I took the opportunity to say that I was grieved to find that, while I was doing my best to please him, there were persons who were always misrepresenting me to him in a very treacherous manner, that I confessed I found it hard to forgive them, and could not help suspecting the Grand Equerry, "who," I continued, "since the affair of the Princess d'Harcourt, has never forgiven me, because, when I had the honour of telling your Majesty the story, you saw that I was telling the truth, and not the Grand Equerry; I do not repeat the particulars, because I do not wish to weary your Majesty, and I think they are still fresh in your Majesty's memory."

The King replied that he remembered the affair perfectly, and he said it in such a polite and gentle manner that I believe he would have listened patiently to the story over again, but I did not think it advisable to detain him so long. I wound up by begging him, in case he heard of anything in my conduct which displeased him, to send me word, if His Majesty would not condescend to tell me himself; and he would see that his kindness would be immediately followed either by my justifying my conduct, or confessing and asking forgiveness for my errors. The King stood for a moment after I had finished, as if waiting to see if I had anything more to say; then he left me, with a slight but very gracious bow, telling me that I had spoken well, and that he was pleased with me. I retired with a profound bow, extremely relieved, and glad to have had the opportunity of speaking as I had done about myself, the Dukes, and the Princes, especially about the Grand Equerry; for, from the King's recollection of the Princess d'Harcourt's affair, and his silence respecting the Grand Equerry, I was more convinced than ever that it was he to whom I was indebted for the trouble from which I had once more extricated myself.

As I came out of the King's room, looking very much pleased, I found M. le Duc and several courtiers of distinction in the ante-chamber; they looked hard at me as I passed, being much surprised at the length of my audience, which had lasted half an hour; it was a very rare thing for unofficial persons to obtain a private audience, and none had ever lasted half as long as mine did. I went up to my rooms, to put Madame de Saint-Simon out of suspense; then I went to Chamillart; he had just finished dinner and was surrounded by a number of persons, among them the Princess d'Harcourt. As soon as he caught sight of me he left them, and came up to me. I whispered to him that I had just had a long conversation with the King, and was quite satisfied, but that as he was not alone I would tell him all about it in the evening. He insisted on hearing it then and there; because, he said, he had to see the King on business, and, as the King was certain to mention the subject, he wished to know all about it beforehand, so as to be in a position to serve me. So I told him my story, and he congratulated me on having spoken so well.

Madame Chamillart and her daughter were much sur-

prised, and grateful to me for having taken on myself the responsibility for their refusal to make the collection. I found them very angry at some things which had been said about them by the Grand Equerry and his brother, M. de Marsan, who were by way of being their friends. I did my best to blow up this flame, but it was of no use ; the Lorrainers, by their mean flatteries, managed to conciliate them, so that at the end of a fortnight they were on the same terms as before ; and Chamillart himself, who had been as angry as his ladies, did not hold out longer. When he returned from his audience he told me that the King had related to him all his conversation with me ; he appeared to have quite got over his ill-feeling towards me, but he was still annoyed with the Dukes in general, though their case could not be distinguished from my own.

Such was the effect of prejudice, of his weakness for the Grand Equerry, and of the avowed preference of his Maintenon for the Princes. But the King was easily prejudiced, and he very rarely got over his prejudices, never completely ; if any one was clever enough to make him think that his authority was endangered in the slightest degree, he became deaf to all argument ; his sense of right and justice disappeared altogether, and no reasoning nor evidence could move him. It was by skilfully touching this tender spot that his Ministers contrived to acquire despotic authority ; they made him believe anything they pleased, and he was impervious to any attempt at an explanation.

The Chancellor was astonished at my boldness, and delighted at my success. After seeing him I went to the Duke de Beauvilliers, and, acting on the advice of Madame de Saint-Simon, told him that, having had no opportunity of seeing him before the King's dinner-hour, I had resolved to ask for an audience. He was very glad to hear it had passed off so well, but told me that he would have advised me to write to the King, rather than speak to him, though as it turned out I had chosen the best course. I then told everything to the Duke de Chevreuse, with whom I was on intimate terms ; nothing could surpass his astonishment and terror ; but when he heard that I had told the King that we knew he disliked discussion and having to decide things, he recoiled six paces. "What !" he said, "you told the King that, in so many words ? You are certainly very bold !" "It is more than you are," I replied. "I

think you old *seigneurs* are very timid not to venture to say a word to him. If he listened to a young man like myself, out of favour with him, and if an interview begun in a stormy manner ends with such expressions of kindness and politeness after having lasted as long as I pleased, what would it be if you had courage enough to profit by the good footing on which you stand with him, and tell him what it is necessary that he should know! You see I can do so, not merely with impunity, but with considerable advantage to myself."

Chevreuse was delighted that I had been so outspoken, but still terrified; the Maréchale de Villeroy, however, who was a great friend of mine, and a person of much ability and dignity, thought I had acted very well, and that this conversation would do me much good. In fact, I heard from the Bishop of Laon that the King told Monseigneur that I had spoken very ably and forcibly, though with great respect; that he was pleased with me; that the matter was quite different from the Grand Equerry's account of it; and that the Princesses had refused to make the collection. Monseigneur confirmed him in his opinion on the latter point.

The Bishop of Laon was brother to Clermont, whom Monseigneur still liked in spite of his disgrace, which I have mentioned already. He told me that Monseigneur often laughed at the pretensions of the Princes, and at the notions of his friend Mademoiselle de Lislebonne on that subject; sometimes to her face. He heard of this conversation between the King and Monseigneur from Mademoiselle Choin, whom he knew intimately. He mentioned other things to me, which set my mind at ease with regard to Monseigneur's opinions about our rank. I repeated what I had heard to the Duke de Montfort, who had also been very uneasy on that point, but without mentioning my authority. The odd thing was that he was very intimate with the Bishop of Laon, who had kept the secret from him though he had confided it to me; so that the Duke de Montfort, who knew I had no acquaintance with Monseigneur, nor with any of his Court, could not imagine how I had heard these details, and thought the devil must have told them to me.

I have perhaps spoken of this affair at too great length; but, besides that it was of great importance to myself personally, it seems to me that it is by such detailed accounts

of apparently trifling occurrences that one can best convey an idea of the Court. Moreover, it throws a good deal of light on the character of the King. Though usually so inaccessible, so formidable to those who were on the most familiar terms with him, so taken up with his own absolute power, and so touchy on that point, he was yet capable of listening to reason if he could only be induced to listen at all; he would even allow it to be expressed forcibly, provided that the person speaking to him took care to flatter his despotic authority, and seasoned his remarks with the most profound respect. All this is conveyed much more clearly by illustrative anecdotes than by mere words; it comes out naturally in the story which I have just told; as it did in what I said formerly about the affair between Madame de Saint-Simon and Madame d'Armagnac, and between the Princess d'Harcourt and the Duchess de Rohan.

Both the King and the Emperor were suffering from domestic troubles. The malcontents in Hungary, supported by many of the nobility, had seized many towns, and threatened to take Presburg. They sent out raiding parties who set fire to villages within sight of Vienna, and very nearly captured the Emperor while at dinner during a hunting expedition. He was so alarmed that he caused the crown of Hungary to be brought from Presburg to Vienna for greater security. It is a golden crown which was sent from Rome about the year 1000 to a Duke of Poland, and was subsequently taken by Stephen, Duke of Hungary, who assumed the title of King. It is an object of superstitious veneration to the Hungarians.

On our side the fanatics of Languedoc and the Cevennes continued to give much trouble; our troops managed to capture a few of them now and then, but did not do them much harm. The great difficulty was that they had friends all over the country who furnished them with intelligence.

CHAPTER X

1704

Recall of Madame de Nemours—The Duchess of Orleans gives up visiting untitled ladies—Customs of the Royal Family as to visiting—Respect due to a King's messenger—A footman in the place of honour—The Duke de Noailles resigns his dukedom in favour of his son—Madame de Maintenon's occasional fits of humility—Termes—The Dukes lose a distinction—I have a dangerous illness—The Duke of Berwick appointed to command in Spain—Empty magazines—Madame des Ursins opens a despatch—Her displeasure at its contents—Her marginal note—Orry recalled—Madame des Ursins ordered to leave Spain—The Duke de Grammont appointed Ambassador to Madrid—His marriage—Delicate flattery which fails.

THE year 1704 began with an act of kindness on the part of the King ; he would have done better, it is true, if he had given no occasion for it. Madame de Nemours had been banished to her country-house at Coulommiers three years before on account of her proceedings at Neufchâtel ; Puy-sieux, our Ambassador in Switzerland, was warmly attached to the Prince of Conti, who claimed to be the next heir to that principality, and had misrepresented her conduct to the King. She obeyed the order with proud submission, and from her place of exile continued to manage her affairs, and to speak her mind freely with regard to the Prince of Conti, but never complained or expressed any wish to regain her liberty. At last the King was ashamed of such harsh treatment of a Princess over eighty years of age, on account of affairs which concerned her patrimony. She had been banished undeservedly, and was recalled without having asked it. She saw the King two months later ; he spoke to her very politely, and almost apologised to her.

Nangis, the ladies' favourite, in the early days of the year married a rich heiress, the daughter of La Hoguette, brother of the Archbishop of Sens.

Another marriage took place about the same time which caused some surprise, that of the Vidame d'Amiens, second son of the Duke de Chevreuse, with the elder of the two

daughters of the late Marquis de Lavardin. These two young ladies had become very rich by the death of their brother, who was killed, as we have seen, at the battle of Spire ; they were under the guardianship of the Noailles. The Duke de Noailles for many years had irritating lawsuits with M. de Bouillon about the feudal dependence of his estates in the Viscounty of Turenne ; M. de Chevreuse had acted as a mediator, and ill-feeling on both sides seemed to be dying out, when, not long before the time I speak of, M. de Bouillon sent troops into the Viscounty to punish some rebellious vassals, who, he declared, were abetted and supported by M. de Noailles. That caused a fresh quarrel between them ; M. de Chevreuse again interposed ; and it was said that this marriage was proposed by the Noailles in order to secure his influence on their side. The Vidame had an elder brother who had children, his father and brother were both in debt, and the property of the late Duke de Chaulnes, which would come to him after his father's death, was heavily mortgaged. No one would have supposed at that time that this younger son would succeed to his father's office, would be created a Duke and Peer, and eventually become a Marshal of France.

It was at this time the Duchess of Orleans gave up visiting untitled ladies.¹ Formerly the Queen used to visit Duchesses on the occasion of a birth, a marriage, or the death of a near relation ; but the King eventually put a stop to it. Although the Queen was most submissive and attentive to the King's wishes, though her virtue was beyond suspicion, and her nature so quiet and dull as to give him no grounds for uneasiness, the King was annoyed by her frequent visits to the Carmelite convent in the Rue du Bouloy. The nuns acquired a sort of importance in consequence ; and there were ladies, even of the Court, who for want of other opportunities, used to intrigue with them in order to meet the Queen there. Her pretext for going to the convent was always that she had some visit to make. That, in addition to the general policy of degrading everybody to the same level which his Ministers always urged upon him, was the King's reason for declaring that the Queen should visit no one but the Princesses of the Blood.

The Dauphiness was always in ill-health during the ten years she spent in France ; she never stirred from Versailles,

¹ That is, ladies below the rank of Duchesses.

and visited no one. Madame, who was shy and reserved as well as proud, would not do more than the Dauphiness had done ; and the Duchess of Burgundy followed her example. The Granddaughters of France always visited ladies of quality, even if untitled ; Gaston's three daughters never failed to do so. Mademoiselle did not, on the plea that she only went about with Madame, but the Duchess of Chartres always did, even after she became Duchess of Orleans. But by degrees she discontinued it through laziness ; and finally, on the occasion of the marriages of Nangis and the Vidame, she gave out that she would only make visits out of friendship, and not as a fatiguing duty. People grumbled at this declaration, but that was all. They wanted to be asked to Marly, and consequently did not care to quarrel with her ; though, as a matter of fact, she had no influence whatever.

To the same persons whom the Queen used to visit, on the same ceremonial occasions, the King still sends one of his Gentlemen-in-Waiting. The custom is to offer him an arm-chair and invite him to be seated and covered ; and, when he takes his leave, to lead him by the hand to his carriage. I have heard the King relate that, on one occasion, when he was very young, he sent a letter by a footman to M. de Montbazon, who was at that time Governor of Paris. The footman found him just about to go in to dinner. M. de Montbazon wrote an answer to the letter, and gave it to the footman, who bowed and was about to retire. " No, no," said the Duke de Montbazon, " you are the King's messenger ; you must do me the honour of dining with me " ; and, taking him by the hand, he led him into the dining-room, making him go before him through the doorways. The astonished footman hung back at first, but finally, in great confusion, allowed himself to be put in the place of honour. There were numerous guests assembled at dinner (a circumstance which the King took care to mention), but the footman was always served first. The Duke drank to the King's health, and begged the footman to tell His Majesty that he had taken the liberty of doing so with his guests. After dinner he led the footman back to the door, and did not leave him till he had seen him on horseback again. " That was behaving like a well-bred man ! " added the King. He often used to tell this story, with great complacency ; I suppose, in order to teach people what was due

to him, and to remind them of how the *seigneurs* of the old school used to do their duty.

The Duke de Noailles at last prevailed on Madame de Maintenon to consent to his resigning his dukedom in favour of his son, the Count d'Ayen, who was known henceforth as the Duke, and his father as Marshal, de Noailles. Madame de Maintenon had not been willing to allow her niece to assume her *tabouret* immediately after her marriage; she made her wait a few years for it. She sometimes had passing fits of humility of this sort, but they were never more than skin-deep; they smacked strongly of her former dependent situation.¹

Termes died about this time; his father and M. de Montespan's were brothers. He was poor; he had been handsome, and a favourite with the ladies in his youth. I do not know through what accident he had been obliged to wear a silver palate; it made his speech very peculiar, but, strange to say, it did not affect his singing in the least, and he had a most beautiful voice. He was clever, with a well-cultivated mind; he had not served much, but had a reputation for bravery. He had hardly ever stirred from the Court, yet all he obtained there was barely sufficient for his livelihood; his prospects were ruined by the general contempt with which he was treated. He was mean enough to take the post of First Valet-de-chambre, and nobody doubted that he acted as a spy for the King; he was received nowhere, and no one spoke to him willingly. He was polite, and often accosted people, but they used to run away, barely answering; so that, in the midst of society, he lived in solitude. The King spoke to him now and then, and allowed him to come to Marly whenever he went there, without asking permission; but he never gave him quarters in the *château*; he had to hire a room in the village.

Once at Versailles he received a terrible thrashing from four or five Swiss, who lay in wait for him outside the Grand Equerry's door, at one o'clock in the morning, and beat him with sticks the whole length of the Gallery. He was bruised from head to foot, and had to keep his bed for some days. He complained, and the King was angry; but the instigators were discovered so quickly that the matter

¹ "Elle avait de ces modesties, qui sentaient fort le relan de son premier état, mais qui pourtant ne passaient pas l'épiderme."

Relan, a word long since obsolete, signifies the mouldy flavour which meat acquires when kept too long in a damp place.

dropped. A few days before, M. le Duc and the Prince of Conti had supped with Langlée at Paris, and some rather strange things had occurred afterwards; the King gave them a scolding, and they had reason to think that they were indebted to Termes for it. They paid him out with this beating; there was a great fuss about it, but people only laughed at him, and the King pretended not to know who had done it.¹

When Holy Week arrived I went off to spend it at La Ferté and La Trappe, and returned to Versailles on the Wednesday after Easter. I then heard that the Grand Equerry had turned to good account the willingness of his daughter to make the collection on New Year's Day. On the morning of Good Friday he asked the King, with ostentatious zeal, to be allowed to attend the Adoration of the Cross with his family. It had always been the custom for the Dukes to attend it, ranking next to the junior Prince of the Blood, and no foreign Prince had ever been admitted to it. The King was surprised at the request, and said it could not be granted because the Dukes would be present. That was just what the Grand Equerry wanted; he asked to be allowed to have precedence over them; not that he expected to get it, but in order to secure another advantage. The King was embarrassed, and on the Grand Equerry pressing the point, got out of the difficulty by saying that neither Princes nor Dukes should attend. He told Marshal de Noailles, the Captain of the Guard on duty, to warn the Dukes of the new order. The Marshal protested slightly, representing the rights of the Dukes from time immemorial; but the King's mind was made up. M. de la Rochefoucauld was just getting into his carriage to go to the ceremony when the messenger arrived to tell him of the new order. He grumbled a good deal, but did not venture to speak to the King about it. So this distinction was lost to the Dukes in exchange for that which the Princes had vainly attempted to arrogate in the matter of the collection; and from this time forward no one went to the Adoration of the Cross except the Princes of the Blood and the bastards. When I heard the news, I went straight off to Paris, and did not return to the Court for some days.

We have seen how the Duchess de Ventadour had accepted

¹ Madame says she always believed that Termes was the real father of M. du Maine.

a post in Madame's household to get away from her husband and avoid a convent, and the projects for the future which made her resign it. She wished to succeed her mother, the Maréchale de la Mothe, in the office of governess to the Children of France. About the end of March the King told the Maréchale that he so highly appreciated her care of his own children and those of Monseigneur that he intended to place the children of the Duke of Burgundy under her charge; but to spare her health and relieve her of some of the hard work, he would give her as a colleague her daughter, the Duchess de Ventadour, who would have the reversion of her office. The Maréchale was quite taken aback; she loved her daughter, but not enough to like having her as a partner. She said it was absurd to put a woman who had never had a child in charge of the Children of France, and grumbled so much that her daughter had to be appointed without her knowing it. When she found it out, she was much dissatisfied; the good lady was afraid people would think she was in her dotage, and that she would lose all her authority; she did not attempt to conceal her anger when people congratulated her, and gave her daughter a very unfavourable reception.

The Duchess de Ventadour was so beside herself with joy that, at her reception by the Duchess of Burgundy in Madame de Maintenon's room, forgetful of her dignity, she went down on her knees directly she got inside the door. She advanced in that position right up to the Duchess, who raised her and embraced her. She was then conducted by the Duchess of Burgundy into the next room, where the King was writing; she repeated the same performance, to the great astonishment of the King. There never was a person in such transports of joy. She received a pension of 12,000 livres in addition to the 8,000 which she had already.

The contest with the fanatics still dragged on, and kept a number of troops employed. Villars had nothing to do since his return from Bavaria, and his patrons, Madame de Maintenon and Chamillart, determined to give him the credit of finishing this petty war. Montrevel had to consent to an exchange which was not at all to his taste. Guyenne was perfectly quiet, and there was no need of a commandant there; but he was sent there with the same pay and authority which he had enjoyed in Languedoc. He did not like it,

but he had to submit, and went, to spend his time in playing lansquenet at Bordeaux. Villars, with his usual effrontery, said that he was called in like a quack doctor, to a case in which the regular doctors had failed. Montrevel was incensed when he heard this, and while Villars was on the road he obtained two important successes over the fanatics, after which he went off to Bordeaux.

About this time I had an unpleasant accident. I had felt a tendency of blood to the head, and was bled in consequence by Le Dran, a famous surgeon. In the night I felt a pain in my arm, which Le Dran assured me was caused by the bandage being too tight. To cut matters short, in two days my arm swelled up to the size of my thigh, with great pain and inflammation. They kept me two days more with dressings on the wound made in the operation of bleeding ; but at last M. de Lausun, thinking with some reason that I was very ill, insisted on calling in Maréchal, and went off to Versailles to get the King's permission. Maréchal never went to Paris without it, and rarely slept anywhere away from the King ; he was given leave to see me, and remain with me if necessary. Directly he saw me he cut open my arm from one end to the other. It was high time ; the abscess was reaching the vital parts, as was shown by the violent fits of shivering which I had. He remained with me for two days, and continued to call every day for some time. It is extraordinary with what dexterity and lightness of hand he performed the operation, dressed the wound, and made me comfortable. He took advantage of my accident to speak about me to the King, who was extremely kind to me after my recovery. I had strained my arm slightly the day I was bled, and both Maréchal and Fagos were of opinion that a tendon had been wounded. I was made to carry a weight for some time, and my arm in consequence retained its natural length ; I have had no trouble with it since.

Triboulean, surgeon to the French Guards, was one of those called in to assist Maréchal ; he remarked to me that M. de Marsan must be a great friend of mine, for he had stopped him in the street and inquired about all the particulars of my case with real interest. The fact was that he was after my Governorship, which he asked for. The King replied by asking him whether I had not a son, and reduced him to silence and confusion. Chamillart, without being asked, had made sure of my government for my son. I

never took any notice of this proceeding of M. de Marsan's ; and indeed I had no intercourse with him, nor with any of the Lorrainers.

The Church and the world each lost a devoted servant in two prelates : the famous Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, and Cardinal de Furstemberg. Both were so celebrated, though in very different ways, that I need not say much about them. The first was universally regretted ; even in advanced old age he produced works which put to shame Bishops, Doctors, and learned men in the prime of life. The Cardinal, on the other hand, after having so long attracted the interest of Europe, had been for some time a useless cumberer of the ground. Chamillart obtained the vacant place of Almoner to the Duchess of Burgundy for his brother, the imbecile Bishop of Senlis. Bissy, Bishop of Toul, allowed himself to be persuaded to accept the see of Meaux. He had previously declined Bordeaux, but he hoped great things from a diocese like Meaux, within easy reach of the Court ; and it was not long before he showed that he knew how to make the most of his advantages.

After a long delay, and being twice driven by tempests to take refuge in England, the Archduke Charles landed in Portugal. He brought very little assistance with him, and found on his arrival that nothing was ready. This discovery, and the fidelity of the Spaniards to Philip V, were a poor fulfilment of the promises of the Amirante of Spain, who had assured the Archduke that there would be a general revolt in his favour. But no one stirred ; and the Amirante fell into such extreme discredit that he was often in danger of being put to death by the Portuguese, who blamed him for having dragged them into the war against their will ; while the Archduke reproached him with having hastened his arrival on the strength of hopes which turned out to be utterly without foundation.

It is unnecessary to repeat what I have said about the brilliant position of Madame des Ursins in Spain. She had contrived to oust our Ministers from any share in the management of Spanish affairs ; all correspondence connected with them was carried on entirely by herself with Madame de Maintenon and the King ; Harcourt only, who was the enemy of the Ministers, being in the secret. M. de Beauvilliers, seeing no help for it, had asked the King to dispense with his services so far as Spanish affairs were

concerned. The Chancellor had heard nothing of them for some time. Chamillart would perhaps not have been so obnoxious to the two ladies, but for his intimacy with the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers ; but his time was fully occupied with his two departments of War and Finance, and on the pretext of saving him trouble he was told nothing about Spain except such things as necessarily concerned him, the supply of troops and money. The only other Minister was Torcy, who would gladly have had nothing to do with Spanish affairs ; he was consulted about nothing, and only informed of the resolutions agreed upon when his official signature was required.

It was necessary to send an army to the Portuguese frontier to resist the Archduke ; a French General was therefore required to command the French troops, perhaps to take command of the whole force. Madame des Ursins thought of giving the command to the Duke of Berwick. She knew him to be good-tempered, and a supple courtier ; he was moreover poor, and he had a family ; she thought that, by putting him under an obligation to her, she would be able to do what she liked with him ; and she wished to avoid having to reckon with a Frenchman of independent position. She therefore suggested his appointment, and induced the Queen of England, with whom she had long been intimate, to use her influence in his favour. The King, out of regard for the late King of England, had allowed Berwick to serve in the army with the same privileges as his own bastards, and had given him the rank of Lieutenant-General at a very early age ; he was now glad of the opportunity to entrust him with the command of an army. Berwick had always served in Flanders, and had become intimate with M. de Luxembourg, M. le Duc, and the Prince of Conti, and later on with Marshal de Villeroy. The two Generals looked upon him as their pupil, both as a soldier and as a courtier. He had great talents for both employments, and they had praised him highly to the King. The Duke of Berwick was therefore appointed to the command in Spain ; but, as he had never before commanded in chief, the King appointed Puységur as second in command, with the special care of the magazines and everything connected with the commissariat.

Puységur was the first to start. From the Pyrenees to Madrid he found everything well arranged for the sub-

sistence of the French troops, and reported favourably. At Madrid he went into the subject with Orry, who gave him a detailed report of the arrangements made for the commissariat, showing that there were full magazines at certain places sufficient to maintain the army in abundance, not only on the march to the Portuguese frontier, but after it arrived there ; and all arrangements made for a supply of money during the campaign. Puységur, having found everything in good order so far, had no reason to doubt Orry's assurance ; but he thought it as well to make a personal inspection. What was his surprise to find that between Madrid and the Portuguese frontier there was absolutely nothing ready ! He visited all the places where full magazines were indicated by Orry's papers ; he found, not only that they were empty, but that no orders had been given for filling them. He reported accordingly to the King, confessing that he had been deceived by Orry's misrepresentations ; and did all he could to remedy the deficiency, though it was no longer possible for the army to make an aggressive campaign.

Madame des Ursins had reduced the unfortunate Abbé d'Estrées to such a state of subjection that he made the extraordinary agreement that he, the Ambassador of France, would not write to his Court, except in concert with her, and would not send any letter without showing it to her first. After a time he found this arrangement intolerable, and contrived to cheat her out of one or two despatches. But he did not do it very cleverly ; and Madame des Ursins, who had her eye everywhere, and was well served, got wind of it through the post-office. She laid her plans accordingly, and the Abbé's next despatch to the King was intercepted and brought to her. She opened it, and, as she expected, its contents were not pleasing to her ; but what enraged her most was that the Abbé, speaking of the sort of Council composed of herself, Orry, and Aubigny, said that the latter was ostensibly her equerry, but that no one doubted that she had married him ! Beside herself with rage, she seized a pen and wrote in the margin : " Married indeed ! certainly not ! " She showed the letter in this condition to the King and Queen, and other persons, with loud complaints of the insult offered to her. To this piece of folly she added that of sending on the letter, with her marginal note, to our King ; complaining that the

Abbé d'Estrées had broken his word by sending a despatch without having previously shown it to her.

The Abbé on his side complained no less loudly of the violation of his letter, of the offence offered to his character as Ambassador, and of the disrespect shown to the King. The Queen warmly espoused the cause of Madame des Ursins, and spoke of the Abbé d'Estrées in such a way as to make his further stay in Spain impossible. The King, her husband, said something in favour of Madame des Ursins, but he took little part in the quarrel ; either because his innate good sense, though fettered by his cold and sluggish nature, told him that what she had done was indefensible, or because his natural indolence made him incapable of standing up warmly for any one.

The despatch, with the marginal note, reached our King at a bad time for Madame des Ursins. He had received Puysegur's report from the Portuguese frontier not long before, and was very angry with Orry and herself, for they were always considered as acting conjointly, and she had warmly supported Orry's lies. Our Ministers did not fail to make the most of this opportunity for recovering a portion of their influence, and encouraged the King in his dissatisfaction with the Spanish Government. Madame de Maintenon, feeling that the moment was critical for Madame des Ursins and herself, did all she could to protect Orry ; and she was supported by Harcourt, whose personal interest was involved in sustaining the authority of the two ladies, and preventing the Ministers from having any share in the management of Spanish affairs.

While this struggle was still undecided, the fatal despatch arrived, accompanied by the complaints of the Abbé d'Estrées. His uncle, the Cardinal, did all he could to encourage the Ministers to profit by this unexpected opportunity ; and the scandal had been so public that the King could not avoid consulting them on the subject. Madame de Maintenon could not in common decency defend such an audacious act of disrespect, at which the King showed himself so highly offended ; and all Harcourt's skill was unavailing. It was decided to recall Orry, and to send Madame des Ursins back to Rome ; but there was the risk that the King of Spain would be moved by the Queen's distress to take their part, and that the order would be flatly disobeyed. It was determined to temporise in

order to strike the blow without risk of failure. The King sent Madame des Ursins a severe rebuke for her unparalleled audacity ; the Abbé d'Estrées was informed that she had been reprimanded, and that he had just reason to complain ; but for the present that was all.

The Abbé, who had hoped that Madame des Ursins would be banished, was in despair when he saw her get off so lightly, without any reparation to himself ; he felt that he was useless in Spain, and demanded his recall. He was taken at his word ; and it was another triumph for the Princess des Ursins. But while she was enjoying it, Cardinal d'Estrées, with the support of the Ministers and of the Noailles, was using all his influence with the King to procure for his nephew some public and striking mark of his favour. The difficulty was to know what to give him. His morals and mode of life unfitted him for the episcopate ; a rich abbey would not be a sufficiently conspicuous gift ; it was resolved to confer an almost unprecedented favour on him. There was only one previous instance of a churchman, under the rank of Bishop, being made a Knight Commander of the Order ; nevertheless, the King, after some hesitation, announced that the first blue ribbon vacant by the death of an ecclesiastic would be given to the Abbé d'Estrées. He had not long to wait, for Cardinal de Furstemburg died almost immediately afterwards ; and his death provided the King with another opportunity of showing favour to the Estrées family. He sent at once to the Cardinal to say that, as his modesty would probably prevent him from asking for the vacant Abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés, he gave it him unasked. These two striking marks of favour, conferred with such a short interval between them, were highly satisfactory to both uncle and nephew. The Cardinal, who was thoroughly noble and disinterested, was delighted ; he said candidly that his pleasure was caused entirely by the thought of Madame des Ursins' mortification ; and, indeed, she had some reason to be uneasy.

Notwithstanding Orry's misconduct, the campaign was begun on the side of Portugal. The King of Spain wished to take the field himself ; Madame des Ursins, who did not wish to lose sight of him, used all her influence to prevent him, or, at any rate, to induce him to take the Queen with him. Our King, who had his own designs, had already

told his grandson that his rival, being himself in arms on Spanish soil, it would be shameful and unbecoming not to take the field against him in person. He now wrote again to encourage him in his resolution ; and expressed himself strongly against the Queen going to the army, on account of the inevitable expense and the embarrassment she would cause. The Queen, therefore, remained at Madrid ; and the King joined his army about the middle of March, accompanied by the Abbé d'Estrées, who had orders to remain with him pending the arrival of his successor.

Having thus secured the separation of the King from his wife, our King wrote to his grandson respecting the banishment of the Princess des Ursins, in a style which let him see that he considered it absolutely necessary, and that he would listen to no remonstrances. At the same time he wrote even more strongly to the Queen, and sent a letter to the Princess des Ursins, ordering her to leave Spain immediately, and retire to Italy. This was a thunder-stroke which reduced the Queen to despair, but did not overwhelm the person chiefly concerned. Her eyes were opened to all that had passed since the affair of the despatch with the marginal note ; she saw that there had been a preconcerted design to get rid of her during the separation of the King and Queen, and that her momentary triumph had been an illusion. But she was not cast down ; she saw that all was lost for the moment, but she did not despair for the future ; she set about to prepare resources in Spain, till she could contrive to regain her favour in France. She asked no favour, except to be allowed to put off her departure for a few days, which she employed in choosing her successor, as *camarera-major*, feeling certain that she could displace her if she ever contrived to return to Spain. Her choice fell on the Duchess of Monteillano, sister to the late Prince of Isenghien, an excellent person, but very dull and timid, and anxious to please ; I knew her in Spain when she was *camarera-major* to the daughter of the Duke of Orleans, afterwards Queen.

Madame des Ursins also appointed as one of the Queen's waiting-women a clever person, entirely devoted to her, by whose means she was sure of knowing all that went on, and could keep up a correspondence with the Queen. She gave the Queen all necessary instructions, and, in a word, made all her arrangements, without paying the slightest

attention to the reiterated orders brought by successive couriers, till all was complete. In the meantime she went about the town, paying farewell visits; giving out that her only regret was for leaving the Queen, and not saying a word about the treatment she had received. She bore it with steady and masculine courage, without any air of pride, so as to give no further cause of offence, but without the slightest appearance of servility. A fortnight after she had received the order she started, but remained for five weeks at Alcalá, from which place it is supposed that she paid more than one visit to Madrid. At last she set off for Bayonne, travelling by easy stages, and stopping as often as she dared.

In the meantime, the Abbé d'Estrées' successor was appointed, and the selection caused a good deal of surprise. The post was given to the Duke de Grammont, who had nothing to recommend him except his name, his rank, and a pleasing face. He was the son of that Marshal de Grammont who so well understood the art of keeping in with all parties, and never made a mistake as to which was going to get the upper hand. He acquired a fortune, and attained a position of the highest consideration, by his intimacy with Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin; and through the latter he obtained the confidence of the Queen and the King, her son. The follies of his eldest son, the Count de Guiche, were a lasting grief to him, and were the cause of the command of the regiment of Guards being lost to his family, for he could not get it transferred to his younger son, the Duke de Grammont of whom I am now speaking, then known as Louvigny.

The Duke de Grammont was clever, with a handsome, manly face; owing to the distinguished position of his father he was admitted to a share in all the amusements of the King's younger days, and he always remained on familiar terms with him. He married the daughter of Marshal de Castelnau, with whom he had carried gallantry a little too far. Her brother, who afterwards died and left her very rich, was not disposed to stand any nonsense, and forced him to marry her at the sword's point. He had no great reputation for courage, and it was no better as regards play or money matters; in his governments of Bayonne and Béarn people used to be careful of their purses with him. When the pleasures of the King's youth

and middle age were succeeded by seriousness and devotion the Duke de Grammont no longer had daily access to him ; it came into his head that he might preserve something of his old familiarity by pandering to the King's love of flattery, and he offered to write a history of his reign. The King was pleased to have a biographer of such distinction ; and the Duke was enabled to have some private interviews with him to consult him about facts, and show him specimens of his work. But his pen was not fitted for so great an enterprise ; he had only undertaken it to pay his court, and did not persevere very long.

Having become connected with the Noailleses by his son's marriage, and father-in-law to Marshal de Boufflers, he was more ambitious than ever of playing a leading part, and tried hard to be employed as an Ambassador. He was as little fitted for diplomacy as for writing history ; but, by dint of perseverance, he managed to obtain the Spanish embassy at a time when few people cared to accept it, and face the ill-humour of the Spanish Court just after the catastrophe of Madame des Ursins. Nevertheless, the appointment caused surprise. His character was notorious, and, moreover, he had just put the finishing touch to his dishonour by marrying a wretched old woman named La Cour. She had been kept for some years by Des Ormes, Controller-General of the King's household ; the Duke de Grammont was a friend of his, and knew perfectly the relations which existed between them. When Des Ormes died, he took her and kept her, and finally married her, although she had grown old and ugly, and had only one eye. This episode in the life of a private person, though very interesting to his family, would not be worth mentioning here, but for what follows.

Having contracted a secret marriage, it occurred to the Duke that he had offered the King the most delicate form of flattery, namely, imitation, and that Madame de Maintenon would be still more pleased with it, because he himself had declared his marriage. He employed some of those wretched, stupid priests¹ from the Missions who have charge of the parish of Versailles to represent to the King the merit of the truly religious action which he had performed, and hold it up as an example. It may be readily

¹ " Ces barbichets des Missions," Saint-Simon calls them. They wore chin-tufts like their founder, St. Vincent de Paule.

supposed how flattered the King and Madame de Maintenon were; the insinuated comparison made Madame de Maintenon furious, and the King was so angry that the Duke de Grammont did not venture to appear in his presence for some days. He was forbidden to allow his wife to assume the rank of Duchess, or any marks of dignity; she was not to come near the Court, and, especially, not to set foot in Spain. He had been appointed Ambassador before the announcement of his marriage, but the appointment was not made public till afterwards; and, notwithstanding the anger of the King and Madame de Maintenon, they could not very well take the post from him; it would have drawn public attention too pointedly to his offence. It would never have entered the head of any one but the Duke de Grammont to attempt to please by such an odious comparison. He was infatuated by this creature; and it was natural that she should reason like a servant-girl, for she had been one originally. So she put this fine idea into his head, and he was delighted with it, as he was with everything she said; even after this failure, he still continued to trust her blindly.

He was strictly forbidden to see the Princess des Ursins, whom he would probably meet on his way to Spain. Though she could not expect to be listened to at Versailles, so soon after the thunderstroke which had been launched from thence, her courage did not forsake her. Everything passes away in time at a Court, even the most terrible storms, if a person has good backers, and does not give way to anger or despair. Madame des Ursins, while slowly pursuing her journey, sent reiterated requests to be allowed to come to Court and speak in her own defence; not that she expected her request to be granted, but she hoped to obtain a modification of her banishment, to some place in France, instead of Italy. Neither Madame de Maintenon nor Harcourt wished her to be sent to Italy, and after the first shock was over they recovered their spirits. The King had been obeyed, and was enjoying his vengeance; after such a demonstration of his power, justice might perhaps be tempered by mercy; on reflection, it seemed prudent not to drive the Queen of Spain to extremities for a matter which did not affect public affairs in any way. Madame de Maintenon used this argument to the King, and with some trouble obtained leave for Madame des Ursins to remain

at Toulouse, as a great favour ; but for the present she dared not arouse the King's suspicions by asking for anything more.

Madame des Ursins saw that she must bide her time, but she was by no means discouraged ; she relied on herself and expected great assistance from her friends. With such supporters as Madame de Maintenon, Harcourt, and the Queen of England, assisted by Cosnac, Archbishop of Aix, a very able and experienced man, and by her brother, who, though blind, was quite capable of organising and conducting an intrigue, it seemed impossible that Madame des Ursins should be left very long at Toulouse, within reach of the King and Queen of Spain, and able to direct their conduct by her secret agents.

Orry was ordered to return to France, to justify his audacious lies and his maladministration, which had saved the Archduke and ruined the campaign. It must have resulted in the complete conquest of Portugal if Puységur had found the magazines on the frontier only half as well supplied as this audacious rascal had stated.

The Duke de Grammont was given 60,000 livres for his outfit, and 12,000 livres a year in lieu of the Ambassadorial privilege of importing his household supplies free of duty. This privilege had been greatly abused. Charmont, Ambassador at Venice, was always quarrelling with the Venetian Government on the subject. At last they discovered merchants who, under the protection of his passports, were exporting salt from the territories of the Republic into those of the Emperor at the head of the Adriatic Gulf. They sent these passports to their Ambassador at Paris, with orders to make a serious complaint to the King. He had an audience for that express purpose. A man of quality would have had a bad time of it, but Charmont was by birth a Hennequin, and the Ministers threw their shield over him. The matter went off quietly ; he was recalled, but not for some time. He even had a very gracious reception on his return, and was selected by the King to have the " pen " of the Duke of Burgundy.

CHAPTER XI

1704

Visit of the Duke of Mantua—A son-in-law of the King promoted—Trois-villes—La Feuillade—Return of Phélypeaux—Marlborough's advance into Germany—The lines of Donauwerth—Death of the Abbess of Fontevrault—Marshal de Villeroy outmanœuvred—Battle of Blenheim—Anxiety at Court—Reported cowardice of Rousy and Blansac—Marshal Tallard a prisoner—Silly—Rejoicings for the birth of the Duke of Brittany.

THE Count de Toulouse started for Brest, whither Marshal de Cœuvres had preceded him, and they embarked in the same ship.

The Duke of Mantua, finding himself ill at ease in his dominions, which had become the seat of war, resolved to pay a visit to France. He had rendered a highly important service by admitting the King's troops into his capital with a good grace, so he was sure of a favourable reception. He arrived at Paris two days before Pentecost, and was magnificently lodged at the Luxembourg, at the King's expense. On Whit-Monday he went to Versailles, and was most graciously received by the King, who afterwards led him to the apartments of the Duchess of Burgundy and presented him to her; she was in bed, surrounded by her ladies in full dress, for she was not very well. After a quarter of an hour's conversation the King showed him the Great Gallery and the two saloons, after which the Duke returned to Paris. He paid another visit to Versailles about a week later, when he inspected the stables and kennels, the Menagerie, and Trianon. He rode over to Marly one day and supped that evening with Dangeau, many ladies being present. Dangeau liked doing the honours of the Court, and I must say that he did it very well.

About this time, at the request of M. de Vendôme, the King promoted La Queue, Captain of cavalry, to be Colonel. This La Queue, *seigneur* of the place bearing that name about six leagues from Versailles, was a gentleman of no

great family, and not very well off. He had married a daughter the King had had by a gardener's girl. The marriage had been arranged by Bontems ; the father and mother of the bride were not named in the contract, but La Queue knew the secret, and hoped his marriage would make his fortune. His wife was very like the King in face ; unfortunately for her, she knew who she was, and was very jealous of her three sisters who had been acknowledged. The marriage turned out happily ; they had several children, who remained in obscurity. This son-in-law of the King hardly ever appeared at Court, and then only as a simple officer, lost in the crowd ; but Bontems used to supply him with money from time to time. His wife led a melancholy life in her village, and was allowed to see very few people for fear she should let out her secret.

The Abbé Boileau died about this time from the effects of an operation to his arm very like the one I had ; he had strained it in lifting a folio volume from a high shelf. He was a stout man, with coarse manners, and rather disagreeable ; but very good and honourable. He was noted as a preacher, and sometimes preached before the Court during Advent or Lent ; but, in spite of the influence of his friend Bontems, he never could obtain a bishopric.

Rivaroles, a very good Lieutenant-General, died at the same time. He was a Piedmontese who had taken service with the French, and was much respected in the army. He had lost a leg by a cannon-ball long ago ; at the battle of Neerwinden another shot took off his wooden leg and upset him. When he was picked up he began to laugh, and said : " Those silly fellows have wasted a shot ; they do not know that I have got two spare legs in my portmanteau ! " In spite of his wooden leg he used to play tennis, and was one of the best players of his day.

The King refused to sanction the election of Troisvilles, whose name it is the fashion to pronounce Tréville, to the Academy ; he sent word to the Academicians that he disapproved of their choice, and they must elect another. Troisvilles was a gentleman of Béarn, clever and well-read, very agreeable and gallant. He made a good impression on society when first introduced to it, and was on very good terms indeed with the ladies, including some of distinguished position. War did not suit him quite so well as court life : its fatigues were too much for his laziness, and the clash of

arms offended his fastidious taste. He was suspected of being deficient in courage; but, however that may be, he soon gave up a profession which was not to his liking. He could not get over the impression caused by his conduct; he quitted the Court and took to a life of devotion. The religion of Port-Royal was that which had most attraction for persons of wit, cultivation, and good taste; he went there, and for some years persevered in a life of solitude and devotion.

But he was fickle and inconstant; after a time he went off to his own country, and gave himself up to dissipation. When he returned to Paris, from being a devotee he had become a philosopher. He used to give exquisite dinners, in which, as in everything else, he displayed the most refined taste; in short, he had become a thorough Epicurean. His old friends of Port-Royal at last got hold of him and recalled him to his former self; but he used to escape from them periodically, and his life became a succession of fits of devotion alternating with periods of idleness and laxity. He would have become perfectly ridiculous but for his wit, which made his company much sought after. The only thing in which he was consistent was his aversion to the Court, to which he never returned. He used to indulge in most witty satires of what went on there, which perhaps offended the King even more than his attachment to Port-Royal. This was the reason why the King would not allow him to join the Academy. We shall see by other examples that to avoid seeing him was, in the eyes of Louis XIV, a crime equivalent to high treason, not against his crown but against his person; and he never missed an opportunity of punishing it.

The fanatics, having been beaten in several encounters and lost many prisoners, demanded a conference with Lalande, second in command to Marshal de Villars. Cavalier, their chief, who, though an adventurer, was a man of courage and ability, surrendered on condition of an amnesty for himself and his followers, with passports to enable them to leave the kingdom, and a general pardon for all prisoners in our hands. Roland, another of their chiefs, who was included in the amnesty, refused to surrender, and continued to give some trouble. Cavalier passed through Paris, and wished to see the King, but he was not allowed to do so; the crowd of persons eager to see him wherever he went

was scandalous. He then crossed over to England, where he became Governor of the Isle of Wight; which office he held till he died long afterwards, at a great age.

M. de Vendôme and his brother kept the King amused by weekly couriers from their respective armies; they used to announce projects which could not possibly fail, and were to be carried out in a day or two, but which nevertheless all vanished like smoke. M. de Vendôme's licence and debauchery, his familiar manners with the soldiers and subaltern officers, made him popular with the greater part of his army. There were others who were disgusted at his sloth and audacious braggadocio, but they were kept in awe by his authority and his influence at Court, and never contradicted the excessive praises which were heaped upon him. So he earned the reputation of a hero very cheaply, and the King was delighted at anything which confirmed his high opinion of him.

The elder Marshal de Villeroy, an old stager at Court, used to say in joke that one should hold the chamber-pot for a Minister so long as he is in power, and upset it on his head as soon as he begins to lose his footing. Marshal de Tessé was practising the first part of this pretty maxim; before long we shall see him carrying out the second without hesitation. In spite of the King's precise orders, he had allowed M. de Vendôme to do as he pleased in Italy, without taking the command as Marshal of France; he now acted in the same base courtier-like spirit with La Feuillade in Dauphiné and Savoy, in order to accustom the King to seeing him in chief command. Having a private understanding with Chamillart, he feigned illness so as to let La Feuillade have a free hand; at last, on the plea of ill-health, he obtained leave of absence, and the command naturally fell to La Feuillade. The King, importuned by his Minister, did not like to refuse him the full commission and pay of a General commanding in chief; he was unwilling even to allow his reluctance to be perceived. Having gained this first important step, La Feuillade had to make himself talked about, in order to prepare the way to still better things. He therefore laid siege to Susa, and took occasion to send off many couriers with news of his progress. The fort of La Brunette gave him some trouble, and nearly caused him to raise the siege; but when that fell on the 16th of June, the place capitulated, after a poor defence.

The Chevalier de Tessé carried the despatch announcing this success ; La Feuillade could not do less than give him this slight distinction after all his father's complaisance.

During this same month of June Phélypeaux arrived from Turin, and had an audience of the King, having been released from the rigorous imprisonment in which he had been kept for the last six months. He told the officers who guarded him that the King his master would be in possession of Turin before the end of the year ; and he hoped he would be the first governor, in which case he would cause the house where he had been arrested to be rased to the ground, and on its site erect a pyramid with inscriptions informing posterity of the manner in which the Duke of Savoy had treated a French Ambassador, contrary to the law of nations and to all principles of justice.

This Phélypeaux was a thorough Epicurean ; he thought nothing was too good for his deserts, and indeed he had great talents, both military and civil. But he was peculiar and eccentric ; his manners were charming when he liked people or wished to please them, but otherwise he was touchy, sarcastic, and difficult to get on with. He was badly off, and regretted his poverty, for he was an indolent man, of luxurious tastes. He had a brother, the Bishop of Lodève, as witty and accomplished as himself, and even more of an Epicurean, who, by favour of Basville, exercised considerable influence in Languedoc after the downfall of Cardinal Bonzi. He used to keep mistresses in his own house, and did not scruple to show, and sometimes to say openly, that he did not believe in God. He behaved in this way all his life, without ever receiving an admonition from the Court, and with no diminution of his favour and authority ; but then his name was Phélypeaux ! If Cardinal Bonzi had caused a quarter of the scandal he would have been ruined, in spite of his talents and diplomatic services. This Bishop of Lodève survived his brother and died rich, for he knew how to make money ; he left a number of bastard children.

At the last moment the Duke de Grammont received permission to see Madame des Ursins on his way to Spain ; this was the first favour showed to her since her disgrace ; it was granted because it was not considered worth while to exasperate the Queen of Spain for a mere trifle. But the Duke de Grammont had not sense enough to profit by the

permission. He might have availed himself of a private interview to gain the favour of this important personage, and so have cleared away many of the thorns which awaited him at the Spanish Court ; but he was frightened by the King's anger at the declaration of his marriage, and, instead of trying to conciliate Madame des Ursins, he behaved to her with a stiff reserve which considerably increased his difficulties at the Court of Spain.

Our armies in Flanders and Germany had been kept in continual movement since the opening of the campaign. The Allies, seeing the perilous position of the Emperor, had resolved to march to his assistance and carry their entire force into the heart of the Empire ; but they masked their design in order to gain some marches on Marshal de Villeroy and reach the Rhine before him. The Duke of Marlborough advanced towards Coblentz, leaving Villeroy in uncertainty as to whether he meditated an enterprise on the Moselle, or was merely making a feint in order to draw off our forces from other quarters. Having succeeded in gaining the time he required, he suddenly advanced by forced marches, crossed the Rhine at Coblentz, and arrived in the valley of the Danube towards the end of June.

In the meantime Marshals Tallard and Villeroy had wasted a precious fortnight in the Palatinate, waiting for orders from the Court. Villeroy was accustomed to domineer over his cousin Tallard, and he did not depart from his usual habits now that he saw him in command of an army and independent of him. Tallard, now Villeroy's equal in military rank, was not disposed to give way to his overbearing manners, and some rather absurd scenes took place. But Tallard realised that, if he was Villeroy's equal while with the army, their equality would cease when they returned to Court ; so a better understanding between them was soon restored. This loss of time was one of the chief causes of our misfortunes in Germany. Tallard was ordered to advance through the hills, Villeroy remaining behind to guard the passes in his rear ; and the order was obeyed ; but it was too late. Marlborough attacked and carried the lines of Donauwerth, held by the Count d'Arco, a Bavarian general ; the Imperialists were said to have lost 14,000 men in this action¹ ; it is certain that our loss in killed and

Mr. Fortescue, in his "History of the British Army," puts the loss of the Allies at 5,200 killed and wounded, of whom 1,553 were British.

wounded did not exceed 1,000 French and 600 Bavarians. The Imperialists at once crossed the Danube, and marched on Munich, whereupon Tallard, who had orders to occupy Würtemberg, and was besieging Willingen, raised the siege, and advanced to join the Elector of Bavaria. Before continuing the account of our reverses on the Danube I must go back a little.

During the two months between the middle of June and the middle of August four men attained distinction, and in each case their elevation, though in very different ways, led to singular consequences. One may add, indeed, that they were incredible; it is in such things that we recognise the hand of God, who produces the most important and unforeseen events from the most insignificant causes, and shows the vanity of earthly distinctions by choosing men from a class which the world considers inferior, to be His instruments in upholding His Church and His law. Harley, formerly Speaker of the English House of Commons, became Secretary of State; Leblanc, Intendant of Auvergne; Leczinski, King of Poland; and the Abbé de Caylus, Bishop of Auxerre; each of the four, in his own way, furnished matter for very curious reflection. I need say nothing of Harley now; I shall have occasion to speak of him when I come to the Treaty of Utrecht and the events which led up to it. M. Leblanc will also be fully described later on. Concerning the King of Poland, who became father-in-law to Louis XV, one can only wonder in silence, placing not one finger only, not even all the fingers, but the whole hand over one's mouth. As for the Bishop of Auxerre, the libraries are full of works concerning him, and I shall have to speak of him again.

About this time Chamillart appointed two new Intendants of Finance: Rebours, his first cousin, and Guyet, whose only daughter, unfortunately for herself, had married Chamillart's brother. It is impossible to be more ignorant, and consequently more vainglorious and presumptuous, than these two animals. Rebours must have taken as his model the Marquis de Mascarille, and exaggerated it. The other, grave and precise, seemed to consider it a favour to listen to any one, and yet he never understood a word that was said to him. There never was such a fool as this man, nor such an impertinent ass as Rebours; neither was capable of improvement; and such are the selections made

by Ministers when they are so foolish as to promote members of their own families ! They get no sort of help from them ; all they do is to arouse the displeasure of the public and prepare their own downfall.

The death of the Abbess of Fontevault, at a comparatively early age, deserves notice. She was the daughter of the first Duke de Mortemart, sister to the Duke de Vivonne, Madame de Thianges, and Madame de Montespan. She was even more beautiful than the latter, and, what is saying a great deal, she had more wit than all of them put together, with that inimitable way of putting things peculiar to their family, which is so delightful and so unmistakable. She was very learned, even in theology ; and she had a natural capacity for rule which made it easy to her to manage her colleagues as she pleased, and to carry out successfully some very important affairs. In her own community at Fontevault she was strict and exact, but her gentle and gracious manners caused her to be adored. The most insignificant letter from her was worth keeping, and her ordinary conversation, even on matters of business or discipline, was charming ; the discourses which she pronounced in her chapter on days of festival were admirable. Her sisters were passionately fond of her, and, notwithstanding their imperious nature, spoilt as it was by unbounded favour, they always treated her with real deference.

Her life was oddly contrasted. She had occasion to visit Paris several times on business at the time when the King's love-affair with Madame de Montespan was at its height. She went to Court, and made several long stays there ; it is true that she saw no one, but she was always in Madame de Montespan's rooms, in the most intimate privacy with her, the King, and Madame de Thianges. The King liked her so much that he could hardly do without her society ; he wished her to take part in all the amusements of his Court, at that time so gallant and magnificent. Madame de Fontevault refused obstinately to attend any public entertainments, but she could not avoid private parties, so that the part she played was rather remarkable. It must be said for her that she had been forced to take the veil by her father ; that she made a virtue of necessity, and that she was a very good nun. What is very uncommon, she always preserved a high degree of personal decency and dignity in these places and parties so unsuitable for a person of her

profession. The King's esteem and friendship for her were never diminished, even after the banishment of Madame de Montespan and the rise of Madame de Maintenon. Her death was a real grief to him, and he found a melancholy satisfaction in showing it. He at once gave her unique abbey to her niece, her brother's daughter, who was a nun there, and a person of great merit.

I ought before this to have noted the birth of the Duke of Burgundy's eldest son, which took place at Versailles on the 25th of June. The King was highly delighted, and the Court and the town of Paris carried their festivities and demonstrations of joy to an absurd excess. Notwithstanding the war, and his reasons for being seriously displeased with the Duke of Savoy, the King wrote to inform him of the event. The cause of all these rejoicings did not last a year, and there was soon reason to regret that in the present condition of affairs so much money had been wasted in festivities.

On the 4th of August Tallard effected a junction with the armies commanded by the Elector of Bavaria and Marchin, near Augsburg. The Elector, finding himself at the head of three fine armies, was eager for a battle ; which, he hoped, would place the Emperor at his mercy, hemmed in as he would be between the insurgents on one side and a victorious army on the other. These flattering hopes were the ruin of the Elector. He did not sufficiently weigh the chances of defeat against the certainty of success if he remained quiet. His army was quartered in the midst of abundance, while in front of him the country had been exhausted by the marches and countermarches of the enemy. These wasted districts could not afford more than a week's subsistence to the hostile army ; if he had been content to watch their movements, they would have been forced to retire to a considerable distance. By not adopting this course he committed the first and ruinous mistake of the campaign.

Marchin's one object since his arrival in Bavaria had been to make himself agreeable to the Elector, and Tallard, intoxicated by his victory at Spire, made no opposition to his ardent desire for a battle. To bring one about was now their only object, and it was the easier of attainment because in the actual position of the Allies a successful battle was their only resource. Prince Louis of Baden was besieging Ingolstadt, which he could not hope to take if Marlborough

were forced to retreat by want of provisions. Prince Eugène was keeping Marshal de Villeroy in check. The Marshal's orders were to guard the passes in rear of the Elector; he thought he had done enough when he had established a few strong posts to keep the communications open. He could see Prince Eugène's camp, and imagined that he was thinking of nothing but preventing an attack on his lines at Bihel. He was warned that the Prince had other objects in view, but would not believe it. Prince Eugène had constant information respecting the movements of the Elector; he remained in his lines merely to keep Marshal de Villeroy occupied and prevent him from reinforcing the main army; at last he slipped away to join Marlborough, timing his movement so well that the Marshal could not profit by it either to attack his rear-guard or to send reinforcements to the Elector.

In the meantime the Elector was marching to meet the enemy with extraordinary confidence; on the morning of the 12th of August he arrived in the plain of Hochstädt, which the victory of the previous year made a place of good omen. The Bavarians under Count d'Arco were in the centre; Tallard's army formed the right wing, and Marchin's the left. The Elector was nominally in command of the whole; but Tallard was the real commander, and, as he was very short-sighted, he made some great mistakes in taking up his ground. A stream with fairly sound banks ran parallel to the front of our three armies; it would have been possible either to defend this line, or, better still, to allow the enemy to cross, and attack them while still in confusion. Unfortunately, Tallard adopted neither of these plans; his forces were drawn up at such a distance from the stream that the enemy could cross it unopposed and had ample space to deploy for the attack. Moreover, Tallard's two lines were separated by a boggy watercourse. On his right, near the Danube, was the village of Blenheim, in which he placed twenty-six battalions under Clérembault and Blansac, supported by five regiments of dragoons and a brigade of cavalry, so that this village was held by a complete army. It was a perfectly unnecessary expenditure of force, for our right flank was sufficiently covered by the Danube.

At daybreak on the 13th the enemy crossed the stream and drew up their forces for the attack without incredible

as it will seem to posterity, any opposition on our side. Prince Eugène and his army formed their right wing ; Marlborough, with the left, found himself opposed to Tallard. Prince Eugène could make no impression on Marchin, who, on the contrary, obtained a considerable advantage over him, and could have turned it to good account but for the disaster on our right. In this quarter our first charge was not successful ; the gendarmerie gave way, and spread confusion among the cavalry in their rear, though a few regiments did wonders. But there were two causes which destroyed our unfortunate right wing : the boggy stream prevented the cavalry from being reinforced at the critical moment, and, the infantry being massed in the village of Blenheim, our front was weak. The English, perceiving the confusion of our cavalry and our weakness in infantry, redoubled their charges ; and, in short, our right wing was completely defeated, in spite of the steadiness of a few regiments here and there, and the bravery of the Generals. The Elector's army, being attacked in flank by the same English, was shaken in its turn, though it offered a brave resistance. Thus the field of battle at this time presented the spectacle of Tallard's army in full flight, the Bavarians vainly struggling against a simultaneous attack in front and in flank ; while on our left, Marchin was repulsing and charging the army of Prince Eugène, who more than once considered the battle lost. In the meantime the infantry in Blenheim had twice repulsed the enemy ; and Tallard, seeing the defeat of the rest of his army, was hastening thither to withdraw them in good order, if possible, when he was surrounded by the enemy and taken prisoner, together with Silly and one of his aides-de-camp.

During all this disorder, Blansac, in Blenheim, had assumed the command, for Clérembault had disappeared two hours before, and no one knew what had become of him. The fact was that, for fear of being killed, he had gone to drown himself in the Danube. He tried to swim his horse over the river, I suppose to turn hermit afterwards ; but he was drowned, whilst his valet on another horse got over in safety. Tallard had given most strict orders that no part of the force posted in Blenheim was to leave it on any pretence whatever ; Blansac, seeing the disorder on his left, became uneasy at receiving no further



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orders. Valsemé, a *maréchal-de-camp* in the gendarmerie, happening to pass by, Blansac begged him to go and find Tallard, and ask for orders; he went without hesitation, but was taken prisoner, so that Blansac was still left in perplexity. Ammunition began to run short, and discouragement was spreading among the soldiers, when Denonville, who had been taken prisoner, made his appearance with an English officer; the latter, waving a white handkerchief, demanded a parley.

Denonville was a very good-looking young man, Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Infantry, and son of the sub-governor to the Duke of Burgundy; the favour shown him rather too openly by that Prince had made him bold and presumptuous. Instead of speaking privately to Blansac and other officers of rank, since he had taken upon himself such a strange mission, Denonville, who had a great flow of language and a high opinion of himself, began haranguing the troops and exhorting them to surrender, in order to preserve themselves for the future service of the King. Blansac, who saw the bad effect he was producing, told him roughly to hold his tongue and withdraw; he then began to harangue the men in his turn. But the mischief was done; not a regiment cheered Blansac, except the regiment of Navarre; the rest remained silent. I must explain that I am giving Blansac's account of the matter.

Soon afterwards another English officer¹ arrived with a flag of truce. He told Blansac that Tallard was a prisoner and his army completely defeated; that the remains of the Elector's forces were in full retreat; that the Duke of Marlborough sent word that he was surrounding Blenheim with forty battalions and sixty guns, and begged him to capitulate in order to spare unnecessary bloodshed. Blansac refused at first, but the Englishman asked him to accompany him to a little distance and assure himself that his report was true. Blansac did so, accompanied by Hautefeuille, Colonel-General of Dragoons, and to their consternation they recognised the truth of the English officer's statements. The chief officers were hastily called together, and, though they foresaw the bad impression which would be produced by a surrender, they decided that there was no other course open to them. The terms of this

¹ The Earl of Orkney.

shocking capitulation were put in writing, and signed by Blansac and all the commanding officers, with the exception, I believe, of the Colonel of the regiment of Navarre.

Marchin, who had completely repulsed Prince Eugène, hearing of Tallard's defeat, drew off his troops in good order and was not disturbed in his retreat. The Elector was almost the only person who did not lose his head; he proposed what, as it turned out, would have been the best plan, namely, to maintain possession of his own country, where subsistence was abundant. Unfortunately, his advice was not followed, yet his country, though almost denuded of troops, defended itself throughout the winter against the Imperial forces. But it was our fate to do nothing by halves; nobody thought of anything but retreat and effecting a junction with the army of Marshal de Villeroy, which took place in Doneschind, on the 25th of August.

Marchin only succeeded in bringing back about 5,000 men of Tallard's army, of whom 1,800 were dismounted cavalry. Tallard lost thirty-seven battalions, namely, twenty-six taken prisoners in Blenheim, and eleven cut to pieces in the action. His cavalry, especially the gendarmerie, were accused of having behaved very badly; they fired on the enemy, instead of charging sword in hand; whereas the enemy, who had been in the habit of firing, adopted our custom of charging. Blainville and Zurlauben, Lieutenant-Generals, were killed, with many others; and we lost an immense number of prisoners.¹ Labaume, Tallard's eldest son, was wounded, and died in a few days. The Duke of Marlborough, to whose army the victory was entirely due, kept Marshal Tallard and other officers of distinction, to adorn his triumph in England. He handed over half of the remainder to Prince Eugène, and the treatment they received from the two Generals was very different; Prince Eugène treated his prisoners harshly, the Duke of Marlborough with great politeness. His kindness and modesty were even more creditable to him than his victory. All the officers were uniformly well treated till their arrival in England with him; and the private soldiers, by his orders, received every possible kindness and attention.

The King received the news of this cruel disaster on the

¹ The Allies had 4,500 men killed in the action, and 7,500 wounded; of these 2,170 were British. The French loss was nearly 40,000, including 11,000 prisoners.

21st of August by a courier from Marshal de Villeroy ; he heard merely that Tallard's army had been completely destroyed after a battle which had lasted all day, and that no one knew what had become of the Marshal himself ; but it was not known that the Elector and Marchin had also been present. Letters also arrived from Blansac, Hautefeuille, Denonville, and others, which the King caused to be opened ; but they gave no details ; and seemed to have been written by persons who had lost their wits. This cruel uncertainty lasted a week ; none of the officers who wrote cared to say much about the disaster, merely giving tidings of themselves and their friends ; so that the news came in by dribblets, and there was general consternation. The first thing that came clearly to light was the terrible surrender at Blenheim. Some officers in their private letters also spoke badly of the conduct of the *gendarmierie* and of some general officers. The Count de Roucy was one of those named, and these letters brought up the old story of his retirement from the battle of Marsaglia when it was at its height, in order to have a confusion dressed at the rear. He, and his brother Blansac, were sons of the beloved sister of Marshal de Lorge, and had been brought up by him like his own children. Their wives, with whom I was on very friendly terms, sent to look for me everywhere, and begged me to get Chamillart to use his influence with the King on their behalf. I did so, and my interference was so efficacious that it saved them from unpleasant consequences.

The King was so anxious for news that he asked people himself if they had any ; all letters were brought to him ; but all that could be done was to put together disjointed scraps so as to make up a story which did not seem very satisfactory. Neither the King nor any one else could understand why a whole army should have been posted in and round a village, nor why it should have found it necessary to surrender ; the whole affair was bewildering. At last, on the 29th of August, Silly arrived and had a long interview with the King. He had been taken prisoner with Tallard, and, at the Marshal's request, the Duke of Marlborough allowed him to go and make his report to the King, giving his parole to return immediately. His report contained nothing that I have not already related, but the mention of his name gives me an opportunity for

leaving these unpleasant events for a moment to make a rather curious digression.

Silly, whose family name was Vipart, was a gentleman of Normandy, of very insignificant family and no great property. He was a tall, good-looking fellow, with a handsome, manly face; he had great ability and a cultivated mind, with much courage and military talent. His ambition was boundless, and unrestrained by any scruples; but he concealed it under an air of simplicity and candour. By his wit, his manners, and his learning, which had nothing pedantic about it, he made himself agreeable to the Duke of Orleans, who gave him the command of his infantry regiment. A fortunate chance made him a Brigadier long before his turn, and, consequently, he became a Lieutenant-General at an early age.

Cilly, Colonel of Dragoons, was made a Brigadier in that immense promotion from which I was omitted, which was the cause of my leaving the service. Chamillart had only just been appointed Secretary of State for War, and knew none of the officers. As he was coming out of Madame de Maintenon's room, where the promotion had just been settled, he met Silly, and told him to go and thank the King for promoting him to be a Brigadier. Silly knew that he had not sufficient seniority for it, and suspected that there was a mistake between him and Cilly, the Colonel of Dragoons; but he had presence of mind enough to conceal his surprise, and when the King came out on his way to supper he went up to him and thanked him. The King in great astonishment replied that he had not intended to promote him. Silly excused himself on the ground of Chamillart's information, and immediately slipped away in the crowd for fear of receiving a decisive refusal. Then he went to Chamillart and told him that, after thanking the King on the strength of his assurance, he must be made a Brigadier, or there would be nothing for it but to hang himself. Chamillart was ashamed of his blunder, which he confessed to the King next morning; but he thought, for his own credit, he must back up Silly, and did so with such effect that he remained a Brigadier.

He attached himself to the Prince of Conti and his circle, which was then, and always, supposed to be a mark of the highest fashion, and that was a matter to which Silly was by no means indifferent. He also made advances to

Marshal de Villeroy, but was disgusted with his airs and haughty manners. He got on better with Tallard, who always tried to make himself popular with everybody, even down to the scullions. When they were taken prisoners together, Tallard, who was in trouble about the reception of his news at Court, thought he could not do better than send him as his ambassador, and, as will be seen before long, Silly did him good service. But after their release something occurred which caused a quarrel between them ; apparently it was something which was not creditable to either of them, for they kept the secret so close that their most intimate friends never found it out, and they carried it away with them into the other world. Even after Silly's death, Tallard never let it out, though he had nothing to fear from a dead man who had left neither family nor friends.

After the King's death Silly figured for a time during the Regency, but he was discontented at not being admitted into any of the Councils, and turned his attention to acquiring riches. He attached himself to Madame la Duchesse, who, like the rest of the House of Condé, contrived to amass millions through the good-will of the famous financier Law. Silly, as a sort of favourite, found means to get considerable pickings for himself ; and Madame la Duchesse used her influence with her son, then Prime Minister, to have him made a Knight of the Order in the promotion of 1724, which included so many low persons. Silly then began to play the *seigneur*. Nothing seemed to him too great for his deserts ; he had acquired great influence over Morville, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and his dream was to be appointed Ambassador to Spain, to become a Grandee, and on his return, with his experience of public affairs, to be admitted to the Council, and created a Duke and Peer. But it turned out to be a castle in the air ; M. le Duc was politely dismissed from office, and Morville with him.

A great man, however, does not easily despair. Silly saw, like every one else, that the Bishop of Fréjus, who soon afterwards became Cardinal Fleury, would now be the dispenser of favours and arbiter of public affairs. He was hardly known to the Cardinal, but, having a good opinion of himself, he thought that with a little scheming and patience he would get round him as he had got round

Morville. Having no means of access to him, he took it into his head to pay his court by assiduous attentions, which, he thought, could not fail to please the Cardinal ; and he used to post himself at his door every day to see him pass. This went on for more than a year, with no profit to Silly except an occasional invitation to dinner ; the Cardinal either perceived his design, or his suspicious nature took alarm at such remarkable assiduity. One day, as he was going into his room, he stopped and asked Silly, very politely, whether he wished to see him on business. Silly replied, with many compliments, that he was merely there to show his respect ; whereupon the Cardinal, still very politely, but raising his voice so as to be heard by all the bystanders, said that he was not accustomed to see persons of his position at his door, and begged him drily not to come again unless he had something particular to say. It was a thunderstroke for Silly ; he saw that all his hopes were cast to the ground, and he went off in despair to his house, where he found many guests assembled for dinner. Among them was the Count du Luc, who had witnessed the scene at the Cardinal's door, and who told me the story. During dinner Silly was silent and morose ; at last he broke out into violent invectives against the Cardinal, in a way which made every one look down in silence. He felt that he was causing embarrassment, and doing himself irreparable harm ; but his rage and despair were too much for him.

After this he went off to his country-house, which he had transformed into a sort of *château*. He soon got rid of the few people who came to see him ; I say the few, because his neighbours could not stand the airs of a *seigneur* which he gave himself, to which they were not accustomed. He declared that he was ill, and took to his bed, where he remained for five or six days, though his doctor, whom I knew afterwards, could find nothing the matter with him. Towards evening on the last day his servants heard a noise in the moat, which had more mud than water in it, and, becoming alarmed, they went up to his room. They found the bed empty and his slippers by the open window ; on a search being made he was found in the moat, still alive, in a position which showed that he could have escaped if he had wished it. He died almost immediately, leaving an only sister, whom he had left in want of everything, and

who found in his rich inheritance ample consolation for this shocking catastrophe.

Clever though he was, Silly did a foolish thing on his return after the battle of Blenheim. The King saw him in the evening without a sword, and showed his vexation by his tone in asking what he had done with it. Silly replied that, as he was a prisoner, he thought he ought not to wear one. "What is the meaning of that?" asked the King, with great emotion; "go and put it on at once." This blunder, combined with the wretched details of our defeat which he had brought, made him uncomfortable during his short stay; he became impatient to return to Tallard at Hanau, which he did in a few days, after having been asked to Marly for the first time in his life.

We were not accustomed to reverses, and this one was totally unexpected. The general consternation may be imagined; every family had lost some relative, either killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. The Minister of War and Finance had to find means to replace an entire army; and the King, who had hoped to decide the fate of the Emperor, found himself reduced to defending his own territory on the Rhine. The series of mistakes which led up to the defeat, and which followed it, showed that the hand of God lay heavily upon us. If only the advice of the Elector had been followed, Bavaria might have been held successfully; but every one lost his head, and our Generals trembled even in the midst of Alsace.

The favour of Marshal de Villeroy caused his fatal blunder to be overlooked; and, as we shall see, Tallard was magnificently rewarded. Marchin was treated with indifference; as he had made no mistake, he was not considered worthy of any recompense, for the King did not blame him for the evacuation of Bavaria. All the King's wrath fell on some regiments, which were disbanded, and on certain officers who were declared incapable of serving in future; some innocent men were confounded with the guilty. Only Denonville was dismissed the service in disgrace, so that when he returned from captivity he could not show himself anywhere. I do not say that he did not deserve it for his proposal to surrender at Blenheim; but it was not his eloquence which caused the capitulation; it was that of an English officer who came after him. Denonville was the only sufferer; not one of the Generals

who surrendered their army, for such it was, was punished ; nor was the only Colonel who refused to sign the capitulation rewarded. But the public expressed itself freely concerning the Marshals, the officers who were considered to blame, and the regiments which were said to have behaved badly. There was a general outcry which caused a good deal of embarrassment to the families of the officers who were blamed ; their nearest relations did not venture to appear for several days, and some of them would have done well to retire for a still longer time.

In the midst of the public grief the rejoicings and festivities for the birth of the Duke of Brittany were not discontinued. The town of Paris gave an exhibition of fireworks on the river, which Monseigneur and his sons, with the Duchess of Burgundy and many ladies and courtiers, watched from the windows of the Louvre ; there was much feasting and good cheer, a contrast which may have shown magnanimity, but which caused some irritation. A few days later the King gave an illumination and an entertainment at Marly in honour of the Duchess of Burgundy, to which the Court of St. Germain was invited. The King thanked the Provost of the merchants for the fireworks on the river, assuring him that Monseigneur and the Duchess of Burgundy had thought them very fine indeed.

CHAPTER XII

1704

Marlborough and Prince Eugène entertained at Rastadt—The Duke de Montfort killed—His character—Count de Verue killed at Blenheim—Count de Toulouse at sea—Naval battle and victory over Rooke off Malaga—Preparations for the siege of Gibraltar—Duke of Berwick recalled from Spain—The Duke of Mantua in search of a wife—He declines several great ladies—In love with Madame de Lesdiguières—She refuses him obstinately—His marriage with Mademoiselle d'Elbœuf—Death of the Countess d'Auvergne—Story of her conversion—M. and Madame Chardon—A story better left untold—A charming Princess—Nangis—Maulevrier—His jealousy and madness—Alarm of the Princess—Maulevrier goes to Spain—A gleam of sunshine for Madame des Ursins.

THE three Generals of the Allies, being masters of Bavaria and all the country up to the Rhine, brought their armies to the neighbourhood of Philipsburg, where they found a bridge ready to be thrown over the river in three hours. While their soldiers were resting in camp, Prince Louis of Baden entertained the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugène at his *château* of Rastadt, a miniature copy of Versailles. It was here that the Duke received from the Emperor his patent of Field-Marshal-General of the armies of the Empire, a very rare grade, superior to that of Field-Marshal, which is the same as that of our Marshals of France. The Queen of England allowed him to accept it while he was awaiting the rewards prepared for him in England.

During this glorious repose on the part of the enemy our Marshals had recrossed the Rhine and advanced towards Hagenau. They had reason to fear that Landau would be besieged; Marshal de Villeroy did not consider himself sufficiently strong to prevent it; he contented himself with reinforcing the garrison and furnishing the place with everything necessary for a long siege. Nothing could surpass the rage of the officers of his army. I had received a

letter not long before from the Duke de Montfort, a great friend of mine, in which he said he would break his sword when he returned and become a *président-à-mortier*. His letter seemed so desperate, that, knowing his boiling courage, I was afraid he would commit some daring act of folly, and I wrote to beg him at any rate not to get killed unnecessarily. It seemed as if I had foreseen what would happen. A convoy of money had to be sent to Landau, and Montfort asked to be allowed to command the escort. Marshal de Villeroy refused at first, saying that it was too small a command for an officer of his rank, but finally yielded to his importunity. He took his money into Landau without difficulty, but on his way back, seeing some of the enemy's Hussars, he could not be restrained from riding to meet them and exchange pistol-shots. He was surrounded and received a shot which broke his back. He was brought back to headquarters with some difficulty, and died very soon afterwards, having confessed himself, with great piety and contrition for his past life.

He was not quite thirty-five years old, just five years older than myself. He had an acute and well-cultivated mind; much natural grace, which made one forget his rather stumpy figure and his face, which was all scarred with wounds. His courage might be said to be excessive; he had great military talents, and had studied the art of war; he knew how to make himself popular with his officers and soldiers, yet without ever losing their respect. His open and cheerful look, pleasant manners, and real simplicity of character made him a most amiable and delightful companion; and he was thoroughly truthful and trustworthy. He was very capable of friendship, and very faithful, though he did not make friends with everybody; the best son, the best husband, the best brother, and the best master in the world. He was intimate with Tallard and Marchin, and also with the Prince of Conti; a particular friend of the Duke of Orleans, and on such good terms with the Duke of Burgundy that he was already regarded as a considerable personage in the Court. Monseigneur also treated him with friendship, and the King took pleasure in his conversation, so that he was looked upon by the Court with more consideration than most men of his age; and yet he was popular with his contemporaries, for their jealousy was disarmed by his charm-

ing manners. He had been brought up too strictly, and kept too long under discipline, so that when he was emancipated he broke out into debauchery ; which kept him from paying the assiduous court necessary to please the King, and did much damage to his prospects. But for some time past he had broken off his loose habits, and his amendment had been a great merit in the King's eyes.

My intimacy with his father, the Duke de Chevreuse, had thrown me into his company, and, owing to a certain similarity in our tastes and ways of thinking, our acquaintance had become a close friendship ; so that in serious matters we had no secrets from each other. We were much thrown together in the ordinary routine of court life. His wife and Madame de Levi, his sister, were intimate friends of Madame de Saint-Simon, who was treated like a daughter by the Duchesses de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers. When we were separated we kept up a constant correspondence. His loss was a very great sorrow to me ; I still feel it every day, though so many years have gone by. The grief of his family may be imagined. He left several young children. His post was given to his brother, the Vidame d'Amiens, who has since risen to a high position.

The Count de Verue was killed at this fatal battle of Blenheim. His death released his wife, whom he had kept shut up in a convent at Paris since her escape from the arms of the Duke of Savoy, which I have already related. She will reappear on the scene later on. Verue left an only son by her, who did not long survive him ; and some daughters who were nuns. His post of Commissary-General of Cavalry, which he had just purchased from Marshal Villars, was given to La Vallière, one of the officers taken prisoner at Blenheim, and the appointment was much criticised.

It was not long before the King received some consolation for the disaster at Blenheim ; it was slight, indeed, for the State, but gratifying to himself personally. The Count de Toulouse, who did not in any way resemble his brother, M. du Maine, had fretted under the necessity of spending his first campaign as Admiral of France on the shores of the Mediterranean, without any possibility of fighting the superior squadrons of the enemy. This year he had obtained a fleet strong enough to enable him to try

conclusions with that of Admiral Rooke, which had wintered at Lisbon while awaiting reinforcements from England and Holland. He encountered it near Malaga on the 24th of September, and a furious battle took place which lasted all day. All the advantage was on the side of the Count de Toulouse, whose ship fought against Rooke's flagship and dismasted her. The enemy lost 6,000 men; the Dutch flagship was blown up, and several others sunk or disabled. Our fleet did not lose a single ship, but the victory¹ cost us dear in officers of distinction, besides 1,500 seamen killed and wounded. The Bailli de Lorraine, son of the Grand Equerry, was killed; also a son and nephew of Marshal de Châteaurenaud. The Count de Toulouse showed much coolness and intrepidity throughout the action, and gave his orders with great judgement.

On the evening of the 25th our fleet again caught up that of Rooke, which had retreated towards the coast of Barbary. The Count de Toulouse proposed to attack it again next morning; but Marshal de Cœuvres, without whose advice he was forbidden to do anything, insisted on calling a council of war. Relingue, Lieutenant-General, who was dying of his wounds, wrote to the Count, imploring him to attack and assuring him that he would beat the enemy. The Count made the most of this letter from a man of tried capacity, and laid stress on the prize of victory, which would be the recapture of Gibraltar. The council was inclining to fight, when d'O, the Mentor of the Fleet, without whose advice the Count was forbidden to act, declared against it, in his usual cold and contemptuous manner. The oracle had spoken; Marshal de Cœuvres confirmed it, much against his will; and the council broke up, the Count retiring to his cabin overwhelmed with grief. He acquired great reputation in this campaign; his dull governor, d'O, lost none, because he had none to lose. It was ascertained afterwards that the enemy must have been defeated if we had attacked, and Gibraltar would have fallen into our hands. The Count returned to Malaga, where he met Villadarias, and arrangements were made for the siege of Gibraltar; 300 men were landed from the fleet, with fifty heavy guns; and Pointis was sent with ten

¹ English writers do not admit that this was a victory for the French; but the action was certainly indecisive, to say the least of it, and so much dissatisfaction was expressed that Rooke quitted the service in the following year.

ships of the line and some frigates to cover the siege. The Count de Toulouse then sailed with the remainder of the fleet to Toulon.

Orry arrived at Paris about this time. The King refused to see him, and thought seriously of having him tried and hanged. He deserved it ; but such a thing would have been too severe a blow for Madame des Ursins, and Madame de Maintenon quietly dissuaded the King. The Queen of Spain kept on asking that Madame des Ursins might be allowed to plead her cause at Versailles, and then return to Spain. In her indignation at the constant refusals she met with she attacked Berwick, as the cause of Orry's disgrace, although it was in reality Puységur who had denounced his crimes to the King. She demanded Berwick's recall so urgently that, in order not to drive her to despair, it was granted ; and the supple, courtier-like Tessé, who could be well or ill as policy required, was sent in his place. Madame de Maintenon and Harcourt knew what they were about when they procured his appointment, which was better calculated to ensure the success of their plans for the government of Spain than that of our army in the field.

The Duke of Mantua was still at Paris ; as I have already remarked, his chief object in going there was to marry a Frenchwoman ; he wished to have the King's consent, but he also wanted one to his own liking. M. de Vaudemont, who knew his intention, was anxious that he should marry a lady of the House of Lorraine, which had some pretensions to the sovereignty of Montferrat after the Duke's death. If he had children by his marriage it was better that they should be by a lady of Lorraine, who would in the meantime be well married, might look forward to a long widowhood, and would probably acquire great influence over her old husband. The person M. de Vaudemont selected for the Duke was Mademoiselle d'Elbœuf ; he had spoken to him on the subject before he left Italy, and the family of Lorraine used all their influence to bring about the marriage. Madame d'Elbœuf, her mother, was the daughter of Madame de Navailles, who had incurred the King's displeasure in his younger days on account of the walled-up door into the room of the Maids of Honour.

By the influence of the Grand Equerry, the Princess d'Harcourt, Mademoiselle de Lislebonne and Madame d'Espinoy (for it is astonishing how the family of Lorraine

stand by each other), Madame d'Elbœuf was introduced to all the amusements of the Court ; she was asked to Marly and Meudon, and was sometimes admitted to private interviews with Madame de Maintenon. Her daughter, who was handsome, became intimate with the Duchess of Burgundy ; she played high, and the Duchess and she incurred very considerable debts. For the last eight months she had been absent with her mother at their country place at Saintonge, whether, as was supposed, by order of the King, or merely through Madame d'Elbœuf's good sense, is doubtful ; but they only returned just in time for the Duke of Mantua's visit.

M. le Prince had a daughter, a great heiress through her mother and grandmother, whom he found it difficult to get rid of ; for the Princes of the Blood, forgetting that many of their own ancestresses were not of royal blood, were beginning to consider marriages with the nobility beneath their dignity ; and the most distinguished nobles, on their part, were not very eager to contract alliances which, in many ways, were not satisfactory. He tried therefore to arrange a marriage between the Duke of Mantua and his daughter. Fearing the influence of the Grand Equerry, he impressed upon the King the danger of allowing the House of Lorraine to obtain a footing in Italy, which would make it more dependent than ever upon the Emperor, and might become a source of embarrassment in time of war. The King listened to his arguments, and promised to do all he could, short of using his authority, to further the marriage of the Duke of Mantua with Mademoiselle d'Enghien ; but her ugliness was an insuperable obstacle. The Duke refused M. le Prince's offer in such a way as not to hurt his feelings, but so clearly that the scheme was at an end.

The family of Lorraine, on their part, did not find him in a mood very favourable to their wishes. The fact was, the Duke's choice had been made before he left Italy. Being at supper one evening with the Duke de Lesdiguières, he noticed a ring on his finger with a portrait in miniature ; he asked to be allowed to see it ; he was charmed with the portrait, and told the Duke he was fortunate to have such a beautiful mistress. The Duke de Lesdiguières laughed, and said it was his wife's portrait. Soon afterwards he died ; and the Duke of Mantua was always thinking of the young widow. Her birth and connections were suitable, and when he started

for Paris it was with the determination to make her his wife. It was in vain that Mademoiselle d'Elbœuf was shown to him, as if by chance, out walking or in church ; her beauty, which would have attracted most men, made no impression upon him. He was looking everywhere for the Duchess de Lesdiguières ; but never met her, because she was in the first year of her widowhood. At last he went to Torcy, as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and made a formal proposal for her ; the King approved of it, and told Marshal de Duras to speak to his daughter on the subject. Her astonishment was only equalled by her horror. She expressed to her father the greatest repugnance to submitting herself to the jealous caprices of an old debauched Italian ; and her very reasonable fears for her health if she married a man who was well known to be unsound.

It was not long before I heard of the affair. Madame de Lesdiguières and Madame de Saint-Simon were more like sisters than cousins, and I was also very intimate with her. I represented to her the duty she owed to her family, which was much fallen from its former splendour through the death of Marshal de Lorge, the misconduct of my brother-in-law, the advanced age of M. de Duras, and the position of her only brother, whose two nieces would take all the family property. I laid stress on the King's wishes ; the pleasure of snatching such a great marriage from Mademoiselle d'Elbœuf,—everything I could think of, in short ; but it was useless. I never saw such obstinacy. Pontchartrain also reasoned with her, but he failed as completely as I had done ; in fact he did worse, for he irritated her by threats that the King would know how to make her obey. M. le Prince, having no hopes for his own daughter, took our part ; he begged M. de Duras to use his parental authority, and told him that the marriage should be celebrated at Chantilly as if for his own daughter, on account of his relationship to Madame de Duras, who was descended like himself from the last Constable de Montmorency.

While all this was going on, the Duke of Mantua had made an effort to see Madame de Lesdiguières at church, but she had a thick veil on, and he could not get a peep at her face. He spoke to Torcy about it, who received the King's orders to speak to Madame de Lesdiguières, to tell her, though not with an air of command, that he should like to see the marriage take place, and especially that he wished her to

let the Duke see her. Torcy therefore went to the Hôtel de Duras, and expounded his mission ; on the subject of the marriage he received a firm though respectful refusal ; as to the other point, the Duchess said she thought it very useless for the Duke to see her, since matters were to go no further ; but, as Torcy insisted that the King wished it, she had to give way. The Duke went again to the same church ; Madame de Lesdiguières was there in a side-chapel ; as she was going out she raised her veil, made a slight bow in reply to his, as if she did not know who he was, and regained her carriage. The Duke was charmed ; he repeated his proposals, and the marriage was discussed in the Council like a question of State, as indeed it was.

Her mother was a friend of Madame de Creil, so well known for her beauty and virtue ; she borrowed her house for an afternoon, in order that we might talk matters over with Madame de Lesdiguières more at our ease than was possible at the Hôtel de Duras. All we got out of her was a flood of tears. A few days afterwards I was surprised by Chamillart's telling me everything that had passed in private between the Duchess de Lesdiguières and myself, and also between her and Pontchartrain. I found out that, fearing lest the King should use his authority to compel her to marry, she had begged Chamillart to intercede for her, and get the King to tell the Duke that the marriage was out of the question, so that she might be spared any further persecution. Chamillart did her such good service that a stop was put to the whole affair. The King perhaps felt flattered at the persistence of the young Duchess in wishing to remain his subject, rather than become a sovereign Princess ; he spoke in high praise of her that evening before his family and the Princesses, through whom it became known. M. de Duras was too indifferent to everything to put any constraint on his daughter ; and the Maréchale, who would have liked to do so, had not sufficient authority over her. The Duke of Mantua was told that Madame de Lesdiguières had an invincible repugnance to a second marriage ; he gave up all hope, and turned his attention elsewhere.

The hopes of the Lorraines now revived, and they soon overcame the repugnance of the Duke of Mantua for Made-moiselle d'Elbœuf, which indeed could only be a caprice in the case of a person of her birth and beauty. But they found

it harder to overcome her own. She wished to marry to please herself, and she made the same objections as Madame de Lesdiguières to a marriage with the Duke of Mantua. She had quite subjugated her mother, who, though she would not admit it, was tired of her yoke and would be glad to get rid of her. Accordingly, Madame d'Elbœuf joined her influence to that of the rest of the family, and at last they overcame her resistance. They prevailed on the King to give his consent by the specious argument that it was unwise to refuse it to an allied Sovereign, especially when his choice had fallen on a subject of his own (for the Lorrainers have the impudent habit of disputing or acknowledging their position as the King's subjects, according as it suits their convenience). The King, however, would not allow the marriage to take place in France, and it was agreed that the contracting parties should travel separately to Mantua, and be married there.

The Duke of Mantua at his last interview with the King at Versailles received from him a diamond-hilted sword, as Generalissimo of his forces in Italy. He had held that title, in fact, since the rupture with the Duke of Savoy ; but it was merely a title, without authority, which he was incapable of exercising, and without the obligation of going on active service, of which the danger would not have suited his tastes. He had one more audience at Fontainebleau, after which he set off on horseback for Italy. Madame d'Elbœuf and her daughter followed their prey closely, for fear he should change his mind. When they arrived at Nevers they received a visit from the Duke, and, thinking they had better not go any farther without more security, they persuaded him, much against his will, to go through the ceremony of marriage in the inn where they were staying. After this, he took his leave of them, and they saw him no more till they arrived in Italy, although they travelled by the same road as far as Lyons. The King was much displeased when he heard of this disobedience ; and the Lorrainers had some trouble in appeasing him. They excused Madame d'Elbœuf by pleading her fear of an insult ; and it is quite possible that the Duke, having been inveigled into the marriage by ruses and artifice, might have backed out of it if he had once reached Italy.

The marriage was celebrated over again at Tortona, in the presence of the Duchess d'Elbœuf and the Prince and Prin-

cess of Vaudemont. It did not turn out happily. Whether in revenge for the pressure which had been put upon him, or merely from capricious jealousy, the Duke kept his wife in such strict seclusion that she might as well have been in prison. She was closely watched by some old Italian women, and not allowed to see any one; even her mother, during the few months of her stay in Italy, was only allowed access to her for an hour a day, and they were never left alone together. This treatment, which I had not anticipated, and the disrespect, not to say contempt, with which the Duke was spoken of after his departure, did much to console me for the invincible obstinacy of the Duchess de Lesdiguières. But I can hardly think that, marrying her of his own accord, he would have treated her in the same way; or that he would have been spoken of as he was if he had not made a marriage to which the King was opposed. I have perhaps said too much of this affair, but it seemed to me to be singular in itself, and to throw some light upon the ways of our Court.

The Countess d'Auvergne ended her short life about this time by a strange and very uncommon disease, namely, a dropsy of wind. She left no children. Her husband, who had obtained permission to marry her and bring her to Court although she was a Protestant, was very anxious that she should become a Catholic. There was a famous lawyer at Paris named Chardon; he and his wife were both Huguenots, of the number of those who had pretended to recant, but had never conformed to any of the outward observances of the Catholic religion. It was well known that they were really Protestants, but Chardon's reputation had procured them a number of influential patrons, and they protected them. Some of them attempted to convert them, or at any rate to induce them to listen to argument, but without success; the moment chosen by God had not yet arrived. But it did arrive in time; they were virtuous people, and their piety in their false religion would have done honour to the true one.

One morning, they were in their carriage opposite the Hôtel-Dieu, waiting for their footman to bring an answer to a note; Madame Chardon cast her eyes on the great porch of Notre Dame, and fell into a profound reverie. Her husband asked her what she was meditating about; she pointed to the sculptured images of the saints round the

doorway, and said they had been there many centuries before Luther and Calvin, a clear proof that the invocation of saints had been practised in those days ; that the opposition of the Reformers to this practice was therefore a novelty ; and it made her suspicious of their other doctrines, which were contrary to ancient tradition. Chardon was struck by her arguments ; and from that day they set themselves to seek enlightenment on religious questions. This went on for a whole year, during which Chardon's friends and clients complained that he neglected his work and was never to be seen. At last they were both convinced ; they made a fresh recantation and declared themselves Catholics ; they spent a long life afterwards in good works, and in trying to impart the same grace which they had themselves received to their brethren in their former religion. Madame Chardon became very skilful in controversy, and converted many Huguenots. The Count d'Auvergne introduced her to his wife, who received her gladly, for they were both clever and agreeable women. Madame Chardon profited by her opportunities, and converted the Countess into a very good Catholic. The Bouillons had been angry at the Count's marriage, and had received his wife very coldly ; but her goodness and pleasant manners disarmed them. She became a bond of union between her stepchildren and their father ; she was much liked and esteemed by all who knew her, and deeply regretted.

The Prince d'Espinoy was not nearly so great a loss. He died of small-pox at Strasbourg, in consequence of his insisting on changing his linen too soon, and having his windows opened. I had been brought up with him in a way, that is, we were always meeting each other in our childhood and boyhood. His face was not very pleasing, but he had a well-cultivated mind, and was very brave. His mother had spoilt him, and it was a pity, for he was an honourable man, and his talents made him capable of anything. But I never saw any one so conceited and vainglorious. He always wanted to be first in everything, and never showed the slightest regard for other people's feelings. He was a torment to his wife because she came of a sovereign House of rank superior to his own, and he did not like it to be thought that he owed anything to the consideration and favour which she enjoyed at Court and in society. Notwithstanding the pronounced favour shown her by Mon-

seigneur, she behaved like an angel to her husband ; but she never could manage to make their married life happy. So his death was really a happy release for her, though she kept up appearances in a proper manner. He left a son and a daughter, whose sad fate, thirty years afterwards, aroused general pity, and put the finishing stroke to the misfortunes into which their mother had fallen.

A strange assassination took place during the month of September. The Marquis de Vervins had been for many years involved in troublesome lawsuits with his cousins, the children of the Count de Grandpré ; and they were just about to be decided in his favour. One of these cousins, who held some priories and called himself the Abbé de Grandpré, hired some men to attack Vervins in his carriage on the Quai de la Tournelle. He received several cuts with a sword and was mortally wounded, as was his coachman, who tried to defend him. The Abbé fled the country ; he was tried in his absence, found guilty, and condemned to be broken on the wheel.

This Vervins was a tall, good-looking man, of some ability and cultivation, popular with women, and in society, especially with M. le Duc and his set ; very lazy and very eccentric. All of a sudden, without saying a word to any one and without any apparent reason, he set off for his country-house in Picardy, and shut himself up there for several years. It was not that he had been disappointed in any way ; not with a view to economy, for he was rich and unmarried ; not from religious motives, for he never had any turn that way ; nor from a taste for making improvements, for he never employed a workman ; nor had he the slightest love for field-sports. For several years he saw no one ; and, what is stranger still, he never got out of bed, except to have it made. He dined and supped there all by himself ; if he was forced to see any one on business he received him lying in bed ; he spent his whole time in needlework, and occasionally in reading. This singular eccentricity seems to me worth recording.

On the 12th of September the King arrived at Fontainebleau, having spent a day at Secaux on his way. The Court of St. Germain also arrived there on the 23rd, and stayed till the 6th of October. The King heard on his arrival that the allied armies had crossed the Rhine at Philipsburg, and soon afterwards that Prince Louis of Baden had laid siege to

Landau, the covering army on the Lauter being commanded by the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugène. Villars at last managed to stamp out the rebellion in Languedoc ; it was calculated that only about a hundred fanatics were still in arms in the mountains ; and it was considered unnecessary to keep any troops in the province. M. de Vendôme took the town of Ivrea, with little loss on our side ; the garrison consisted of eleven battalions, who were made prisoners. La Feuillade kept on sending couriers to announce petty successes in the valleys of the Alps ; Chamillart was delighted at them, and received congratulations as if they were really of importance. He took care to make the most of these marvels with the King and Madame de Maintenon.

The occasion now presents itself for telling a story which it would perhaps be wiser to leave untold ; on the other hand it is a very interesting one to write, for a person who watched the affair to which it relates as closely as I did. What inclines me to the latter course is that the matter was no secret, though perhaps the details were not generally known ; and, moreover, the history of Courts in all ages and in all countries abounds with similar adventures. Must I tell it ? Well, then ; we had a charming Princess who by her grace, her desire to please, and the pretty ways peculiar to herself, had captivated the hearts of the King, Madame de Maintenon, and the Duke of Burgundy. Their just displeasure with her father, the Duke of Savoy, had not made the slightest difference in their affection for her. The King, who had no secrets from her, and used to go on working with his Ministers in her presence whenever she pleased to come and stay in the room, was careful to avoid saying anything before her on the subject of the Duke her father. In private she used to throw her arms round the King's neck at any moment, sit on his knee, and amuse herself by teasing him ; she pulled his papers about, opened and read his letters in his presence, sometimes rather against his will ; and she treated Madame de Maintenon in just the same way. With all this familiarity she was careful never to say a word that could injure any one ; on the contrary, she would put in a good word for people whenever she had a chance. She was considerate and attentive to the King's servants, even the humblest, and a kind mistress to her own ; she treated her ladies, old and young, as friends, and allowed them

complete liberty. She was the life and soul of the Court, and adored by it ; from the highest to the lowest, all were anxious to please her ; all went well when she was present, everything seemed dull when she was not ; the great favour she found in the King's eyes made her a person of importance, and her charming manners had won every heart. In this brilliant position her own heart was not insensible.

Nangis, whom we see to-day a very dull Marshal of France, was at that time the choicest flower among the youth of the Court. His face was pleasing and his figure well-proportioned, though neither was strikingly handsome. He had been brought up to intrigue and gallantry by his grandmother, the Maréchale de Rochefort, and his mother, Madame de Blansac, who were past-mistresses in those arts ; and they had introduced him when quite young into the best society. He had no particular ability, except the art of pleasing ladies and suiting his conversation to them ; but he won the hearts of some of the most charming among them, and he refrained from boasting of his conquests with an old-fashioned discretion rare in so young a man. He was in the very height of the fashion in those days ; he had served with zeal and strict attention to duty, and had shown a brilliant courage which was much admired by the ladies ; he was a leading personage in the Court of the Duke of Burgundy, being about the same age as that Prince, who showed him great favour. The Duke, who was passionately in love with his wife, had not the personal advantages of Nangis ; but the Princess appeared to return his affection so thoroughly that to the day of his death he never suspected that she had ever cast her eyes on any man but himself. She did cast them on Nangis, however ; and before long she looked at him a good deal. Nangis was not ungrateful ; but he feared the thunderbolt, and moreover his heart was not free ; it was already given to Madame de la Vrillière.

Although not strictly beautiful, she was as pretty and graceful as the goddess of love. She was the daughter of Madame de Mailly, Lady-in-Waiting to the Duchess of Burgundy ; she took part in everything that went on at Court, and it was not long before her eyes were opened by jealousy. Far from yielding her conquest to the Princess, she made it a point of honour to dispute it with her, and keep it. This rivalry threw Nangis into great embarrassment ; he was afraid of a furious outburst on the part of

his mistress, who pretended to be more ready to make one than she was in reality. Besides that he was in love with her, he saw that a scandal would be his ruin. On the other hand, he was equally lost if he showed coldness to a Princess who, already so powerful, would one day be omnipotent ; and who was by no means disposed to suffer a rival, much less to yield to one. This perplexed situation was very interesting to watch for any one in the secret.

At this time I was continually in the house of Madame de Blansac at Paris, and the Maréchale de Rochefort's rooms at Versailles ; I was the intimate friend of several Ladies of the Palace, who saw all that was going on, and had no secrets from me. I was also on confidential terms with the Duchess de Villeroy, and she heard everything from Madame d'O and the Maréchale de Cœuvres, who were the confidantes of this intrigue, and something more ; my sister-in-law, the Duchess de Lorge, also knew all about it, and used every evening to tell me what she had seen and heard during the day, so that I was thoroughly well informed from day to day. Besides that I found it extremely amusing, the affair might have very important consequences in the future, and it was necessary for any one with ambitious views to know all about it. In the end the whole Court perceived what had been so carefully concealed ; but whether from fear, or love for the Princess, the secret was kept ; it was discussed in whispers, but never allowed to become public. This singular drama went on for some time, Madame de la Vrillière giving way to ill-temper with the Princess, sometimes insolently ; which the latter bore in silence, showing her dislike only by a marked coldness of manner.

Perhaps the Princess thought that Nangis, too faithful to his first love, required the incentive of a little jealousy, or perhaps it came about naturally ; however that may be, he discovered before long that he had a rival. Maulevrier, the son of a brother of Colbert, who had died of disappointment at not being made a Marshal of France at the same time as Villeroy, had married a daughter of Marshal de Tessé. He did not seem to be intended by nature for gallantry ; his face was not pleasing, and his general appearance very common-looking. He was clever, especially in intrigues and underhand manœuvres ; his ambition was boundless, and not without a touch of madness. His wife was pretty, not at all clever ; but she was fond of making mischief, and,

with an outward appearance of virginal innocence and candour, she was spiteful to the last degree. The Duchess of Burgundy piqued herself on showing her gratitude to Tessé, who had arranged the treaty for her marriage ; and, as his daughter, Madame de Maulevrier was admitted by degrees to all privileges in her Court.

Maulevrier was one of the first to perceive what was going on between the Duchess and Nangis ; by means of his father-in-law, he obtained opportunities of becoming familiarly known to her ; he was assiduous in paying his court ; at last, stimulated by the example of Nangis, he ventured to hint at his passion. Finding that she would not listen, he took to writing to her ; it was said that Madame Cantin, a great friend of Tessé's, carried the letters, thinking that they came from him, and were of no consequence. It is also supposed that Maulevrier received answers by the same messenger, addressed to his father-in-law, but really intended for himself. Other things were also believed which I refrain from mentioning. Whether they were true or not, this affair was perceived by the Court, as the other had been, and was treated with the same discreet silence. Under the pretext of friendship for Madame de Maulevrier, the Princess went more than once to her rooms, during a visit to Marly, to weep with her over the approaching departure of her husband for the campaign ; sometimes Madame de Maintenon accompanied her. The Court laughed ; it was doubtful whether the tears were for Maulevrier or for Nangis ; but this rivalry had the effect of rousing the latter, and the pangs of jealousy suffered by Madame de la Vrillière threw her into fits of bad temper which she could not always control.

The necessity for his departure seemed to Maulevrier to be the death-knell to his hopes. What will not a man think of when he is the victim of overpowering love or ambition ! He gave out that he was consumptive ; put himself on a milk diet, and pretended that he had lost his voice ; he exercised such severe self-control that for more than a year not a word escaped him except in whispers. In this way he got out of going to the campaign, and remained at Court. He was foolish enough to confide this device, and many others, to his friend the Duke de Lorge, from whom I heard all about it at the time. The fact was that being obliged, as he pretended, to speak in whispers, he procured opportunities for talking in that way to the

Duchess of Burgundy in public, without causing remark or raising suspicions that there were any secrets between them. In this way he could say what he liked to her every day; and managed so that, among trivial speeches which she answered out loud, he slipped in others, to which she made brief replies in such a way as not to be overheard. People became so accustomed to this that no one paid any attention to it, except that he was pitied for his unfortunate condition; nevertheless, those who, from their position, had most to do with the Duchess of Burgundy, understood enough about it to keep at a distance when Maulevrier came up to speak to her. This went on for more than a year. Maulevrier often used his opportunities to reproach the Princess on the subject of Nangis; but a lover seldom gains anything by reproaches of this sort. He saw that Madame de la Vrillière was out of temper, and it made him uneasy; he imagined that Nangis was a favoured lover, and the thought was insufferable. Beside himself with rage and jealousy, he at last behaved like a madman.

He went to the tribune one day as the service of the Mass was just coming to an end; when the Duchess of Burgundy came out he offered her his hand to reconduct her to her apartments. He had purposely chosen a day when he knew that Dangeau, her Chevalier of Honour, was absent, and the equerries, who were subject to his father-in-law, as her First Equerry, were accustomed to cede that honour to him, so that he might converse with the Princess on the way, and, from motives of respect, fell back out of hearing. Her ladies always followed her at a distance, so that, although the rooms were crowded, Maulevrier had a *tête-à-tête* conversation with the Princess all the way from the chapel to her own rooms. On this occasion he gave her a furious scolding about Nangis, called her all sorts of names, threatened to tell everything to the King, to Madame de Maintenon, and to the Prince; and he squeezed her fingers till he nearly crushed them. When she reached her rooms she was trembling and nearly fainting; she went at once into her dressing-room and sent for Madame de Nogaret; whom she called her little nurse, and used to consult when she was in a difficulty. She told her what had happened, saying that she had nearly died of fright and did not know how she had managed to reach her apartments.

Madame de Nogaret had never seen her in such a state ; she told the whole story to Madame de Saint-Simon and myself the same day, in the strictest confidence. Her advice to the Princess was, not to quarrel with a man who was evidently out of his senses, but to avoid him as much as possible, and above all not to give him any hold over her. The worst of it was that he went about uttering threats against Nangis ; he said he had been grossly insulted by him, and was resolved to call him to account and attack him wherever he met him. It was clear enough what the offence was, although he did not mention it. The terror of the Princess may be imagined, and the state of mind of Madame de la Vrillière and Nangis. The latter was brave enough ; he was afraid of no one, and not at all disposed to refuse a challenge ; but he shuddered at the idea of a quarrel for such a cause. He saw his fate, with frightful consequences for himself and others, at the mercy of a raving madman. All he could do was to take the greatest care to avoid meeting Maulevrier, to keep out of sight as much as possible, and to hold his tongue.

For six weeks the Duchess of Burgundy lived in constant terror, and had to take continual precautions, but fortunately she escaped with nothing worse than the fright. I do not know how Tessé came to hear what was going on, but he was warned of it, and he behaved like a clever man. He induced his son-in-law to accompany him to Spain, persuading him that his fortune would be made in that country. He consulted Fagon, who from the recesses of the King's private room had been watching everything. He was intelligent, and moreover a worthy and honourable man. He readily understood the situation, and pronounced that, as all other remedies for Maulevrier's weak lungs had been unavailing, the only thing for him was to proceed at once to a warmer climate, for the approaching winter in France would certainly kill him. So Maulevrier's health was made the pretext for his journey to Spain ; the King and Madame de Maintenon took all that Fagon said for Gospel, and had no suspicions whatever. Tessé lost no time in getting his son-in-law away from the Court, to put an end to his mad freaks and the mortal fright which they occasioned ; and also to cut short people's comments on the extraordinarily long journey to be undertaken by a man in Maulevrier's supposed weak condition.

It was about the beginning of October when Tessé took his leave of the King at Fontainebleau, and started with his son-in-law for Spain. But he knew better than to go there direct; he was quite aware that the Princess des Ursins was all-powerful at the Spanish Court, and that she had the secret support of Madame de Maintenon. He submitted to the King that he could not serve him well unless he obtained the good graces of the King and Queen of Spain; that, while he had no wish to be inquisitive as to what had passed with regard to Madame des Ursins, every one knew how high she stood in the estimation of their Catholic Majesties; that if he paid her a visit it could do no harm, and might make all the difference to his success as Ambassador.

The King, whose anger against Madame des Ursins was by this time somewhat appeased, yielded to these arguments, and allowed Tessé to take Toulouse on his way. Madame de Maintenon was glad of the opportunity to send letters to Madame des Ursins. Tessé stayed there three days and made good use of his time; this first gleam of returning favour gave great pleasure to Madame des Ursins, and made her look upon Tessé with a favourable eye. He promised her his support at both Courts, and left Toulouse loaded with letters and messages from her to Madrid. The day after he arrived there he was created a Grandee of the first class, and our King allowed him to accept this distinguished mark of favour. At the same time the King of Spain sent the Count de Toulouse the collar of the Golden Fleece, with a splendid diamond badge of that Order; and to Marshal de Cœuvres his portrait set in diamonds.

CHAPTER XIII

1704

Death of the Count de Grignan—Death of Marshal de Duras—Anecdotes concerning him—An unpopular Major—Madame la Connétable—Marshal de Boufflers tricked into resigning his Colonelcy of the Guards—The Duchess of Guiche—Return of Puyssieux—His early history—The King acknowledges an old debt—Pontchartrain's intrigues against the Count de Toulouse—The Count determines to report him to the King—His wife's tears save him—Death of Caylus—Wax masks—A portent fulfilled—The Duchess d'Aiguillon—A curious ducal equipage.

ABOUT this time I lost a friend who had been brought up with me, a very gallant officer of great promise ; he was the only son of Count de Grignan and that Countess de Grignan for whom her mother, Madame de Sévigné, expresses such adoration in her letters—an eternal repetition which is their only blemish. Count de Grignan, who was made a Knight of the Order in 1688, had ruined himself in his post of Lieutenant-Governor of Provence ; so they married their son to the daughter of a very rich tax-farmer. When Madame de Grignan introduced her into society she thought it necessary to apologise for her, and used to say, in her affected way, and screwing up her little eyes, that the best land required manuring from time to time. She was immensely proud of this witticism, which everybody else, with good reason, considered a gross impertinence in the mouth of a mother who had arranged such a marriage for her son ; especially as she said it in the presence, and almost in the hearing, of her daughter-in-law. St. Amant, the father of the bride, who was doing his best to clear off their debts, heard of it, and was so highly offended that he cut off the supplies. That did not procure better treatment for his poor daughter ; but it did not last long. Her husband, who had greatly distinguished himself at the battle of Blenheim, died at Thionville about the beginning of October, of small-pox, as was supposed. The widow, who had no

children, was a saint, but the most melancholy and silent person I ever saw. She spent the rest of her life, twenty years or so, shut up in her house without seeing any one, and never left it except to go to church.

Coigny, of whom I have already spoken sufficiently, died early in October, at the head of a small force which he commanded on the Moselle. He never got over his despair at not having guessed Chamillart's enigma, when he refused the bâton of Marshal of France without knowing it. His son was more lucky ; and so is his grandson, whose brilliant good fortune we see to-day.

Just at the same time died Marshal de Duras, senior Marshal of France, brother to my father-in-law, and his elder by eight years. He was a tall, lean man, with a very fine figure and a majestic countenance ; he excelled in all bodily exercises till long past his youth ; he had formerly been very gallant and a great favourite with the ladies. He had a great deal of wit, and never put any restraint on his sarcastic sallies ; though quick-tempered, his manners were very polite and dignified, and he knew how to give every one his due share of consideration. He was very proud, and never showed the slightest servility to those in power, nor even any desire to please them ; he was always on his guard with favourites and Ministers, often indulging in shots at them ; they always stood rather in awe of him. With such qualities it has always been a puzzle to me how he got on so well. His sarcastic wit never spared even the Princes of the Blood and the King's daughters ; the King himself sometimes came in for a touch of it, but he only laughed and glanced at the bystanders, who looked down in confusion.

One day the King was discussing some matters of military detail, in which he was much interested at that time ; M. de Duras, who was standing behind him on duty, overheard him say that a Major ought not to be popular in his corps. He took Brissac, the Major of the Body-guards, whom he disliked, by the arm : " By —, Sir," he said, " if it is a merit in a Major to be disliked, here is the very best in France, for there is no one hated as he is ! " The King burst out laughing, and Brissac did not know which way to look. Another time the King was talking about Father de la Chaise. " He will be damned to all eternity ! " said M. de Duras, " but I can understand it in a poor monk,

promoted from constraint, obedience, and poverty to a comfortable position, in which he exercises great influence, and has the clergy, the Court, and everybody else at his feet. What I cannot understand is how he can find any one to be his own confessor, for that man will certainly be damned with him, and he gets nothing for it : no more liberty, no more respect in his monastery, not even better fare ; he must be a fool to let himself be damned so cheaply ! ” M. de Duras did not like the Jesuits ; he never lost the prejudice against them which he had imbibed at the time of his conversion from some priests attached to Port-Royal.

He had been a follower of M. le Prince, out of complaisance for his uncles, M. de Bouillon and M. de Turenne. He was the best cavalry officer the King ever had, and the most brilliant in command of a wing or a detached corps. He had not the same opportunities of distinguishing himself in the chief command of an army, and perhaps not sufficient industry ; still, he did very well while conducting the siege of Philipsbourg, and during the remainder of that short campaign in which Monseigneur had his first experience of war. He had always been on bad terms with Louvois on account of M. de Turenne ; and, being disgusted at the devastation of the Palatinate and some severe orders which were sent to him respecting the relief of Mayence, he threw up everything, and never went on active service again. While still very young the King gave him a brevet-dukedom to facilitate his marriage with Mademoiselle de Ventadour, which proved a very happy one for some time, till a demon came and introduced discord. At Besançon, where the Marshal was living as Governor of Franche-Comté, they met Mademoiselle de Bauffremont, an ugly person, poor, and a great gambler, but full of wit ; they took such a fancy to her that she went to live with them at Paris, and stayed many years in their house. No devil in hell was more wicked or more artful than this creature ; it was the Maréchale who had introduced her into their family, but she took possession of the Marshal's heart, and caused quarrels between them which made the Maréchale retire to the country. She never came back, except very rarely for a short visit, preferring her solitude in the country to the life she had to put up with at the Hôtel de Duras.

After a time the Marshal dismissed Mademoiselle de Bauffremont, but only to give himself up to another mistress,

no better than she was. This dangerous and impudent creature was the daughter of Besmaux, governor of the Bastille, and wife of Saumery, sub-governor to the Children of France. She governed the Marshal completely, followed him to Versailles and Paris, and wherever he went ; managed his household affairs, domineered over his children, and got a good deal of money out of him. She considered herself superior to scandal, and said there was no ground for it in this case. Since M. de Duras had become the senior Marshal of France the lady always went by the name of Madame la Connétable ; she laughed, and rather liked it. When the Marshal was dying the priest of St. Paul thought it his duty to turn her out of the house ; though the Maréchale, who arrived at that time, did her best to prevent it, so as not to make a scandal.

M. de Duras never really loved any one except his brother ; but he was rather fond of Madame de Saint-Simon, and for her sake I found favour in his sight, so that he always treated me with kindness and attention. He did not care at all for his children. Nothing ever put him out, or disturbed his natural cheerfulness ; he told the King so one day, adding that he defied him, with all his power, to do anything which would annoy him for more than a quarter of an hour. He was extremely clean in his person ; he even carried it to excess. At the age of eighty he used to break in horses which had never been ridden ; he was the best horseman in France, and the best-looking man on horseback. When the Children of France began to take riding lessons the King asked him to be good enough to superintend them ; he did so for some time, and used to go out riding with them ; at last he came to the King and declared that he would not go any more, for it was waste of time ; whatever the grooms might say, he could assure him that none of his grandsons would ever be able to ride ; they would always sit their horses like so many pairs of tongs. He kept his word, and so did the young Princes.

I could give innumerable instances of his sayings. People in the most important positions were careful how they treated him ; he was more feared than liked. The King liked him, however, and had got into the way of letting him say what he pleased ; if M. de Duras had chosen, he might have obtained any favour from him. He was on duty for the quarter when he was attacked by the dropsy

of which he died. He fought against it for some time, but had to give in at last; and he knew perfectly that he could not recover. The King showed him great kindness when he took his leave, and even shed tears, asking what he could do for him. M. de Duras asked for nothing, and received nothing; though it is certain that, if he had chosen, he might have obtained the reversion of his post and of his government for his son. But he did not trouble his head about it.

Soon afterwards the King went to Fontainebleau; while there he was displeased at seeing that the ladies would not take the trouble to dress for the comedy, but kept away from it. Half a dozen words from him made all the ladies of the Court most assiduous in their attendance, in full dress. Just at that time we received the news that M. de Duras was dying. The King never accepted any excuse for non-attendance at Court; Madame de Saint-Simon and Madame de Lausun had not been able to get out of going to Fontainebleau; but when they heard of the Marshal's state they told the Duchess of Burgundy that they must leave next day, and begged her to excuse them from going to the comedy that evening. The Princess thought they were quite right, but the King would not hear of it. So they had to compromise matters; they dressed and went to the comedy at the same time as the Princess, and then retired on the pretext that there was no room, an excuse which the Princess made for them to the King. I note this trifle, as showing how the King thought of nothing but himself, and how strict was the obedience which he exacted; so that a thing which would have shown an unpardonable want of good feeling in M. de Duras' nieces, anywhere except at Court, was there looked upon as a duty; it required some skill and influential support in high quarters to enable them to evade it without giving serious offence.

M. de Duras died with great courage and like a good Christian. His long illness had given time for schemes regarding the disposal of his offices. The Duke de Guiche had returned from the army very ill; he was now better, and at Fontainebleau. The King had been displeased with his conduct for some time, and had shown it more than once; nevertheless, the Noailles conceived the design of procuring for him the command of the regiment of

Guards held by his brother-in-law, Marshal de Boufflers, who was also at Fontainebleau, and giving the latter the Captaincy of Bodyguards vacant by the death of Marshal de Duras. It was hopeless to expect Marshal de Boufflers to agree to this arrangement, for splendid as was the post of Captain of the Bodyguard, it could not be compared with that of Colonel of the Guards. The Marshal was living on intimate terms with the Duke de Guiche and the Duchess, his sister-in-law; and had no reason for being suspicious of them.

The marriage of the Duke de Noailles had made Madame de Maintenon acquainted with all his family, and with his eldest sister, the Duchess of Guiche, more than any of them; partly on account of her age, for she was much older than any of her sisters. Although she had left off rouge, her face was still charming. She was extremely clever, and could be very funny and amusing; she could even play the buffoon, but without ever going too far; she could also be serious, and had solid accomplishments. She was as pious as an angel, and had been a passionate admirer of M. de Cambrai, Madame Guyon, and all their little flock; but she had given them up in obedience to authority, and her submission gave her a claim on Madame de Maintenon even superior to that which she derived from her brother's marriage. The retired life she led made her company more sought after; she did not always accept invitations to Marly, and Madame de Maintenon took it as a compliment when she went to see her. She may have been sincere in her piety, but her sincerity was not altogether free from artifice. Her devotion was modelled on that of the little separate flock, and like theirs it was quite compatible with great ambition. Although her husband was a very unamiable person, even with her, she was madly in love with him all her life; in order to please him, and also to satisfy her own ambition, she thought of nothing but how to push his fortunes. Her family, who well understood the art of getting on in the world, also wished to push him on, and they helped each other. The snare they devised for Marshal de Boufflers was extraordinary; it was well prepared beforehand, and he fell into it.

M. de Duras died at Paris on the morning of Sunday, the 12th of October, and the King heard of it the same afternoon. Next morning after his *lever* he called Marshal de

Boufflers to him, and, after some flattering and affectionate expressions of his esteem, told him that he could not give a stronger proof of it than by promoting him to an office which brought him into close contact with his person ; he had, therefore, selected him in preference to any other for the post held by the late M. de Duras, and felt sure that he would accept it with the same pleasure which he felt in giving it. That was quite enough to bewilder a man altogether taken by surprise, who was not ready with his tongue, and had never been able to shake off his timidity in the King's presence. He could only bow ; the King, who was prepared beforehand, contented himself with that, and, without giving him time to say a word, disposed at once of his Colonelcy of the Guards, saying that, as an additional favour, he gave it to his brother-in-law, the Duke de Guiche. This was another thunderbolt for the Marshal ; he made another bow, during which the King turned his back and retired, leaving him stupefied with astonishment.

He came out of the King's rooms with tears in his eyes, and went off to tell his wife, who could not understand what had happened, and wept freely. The good Noailles, and their dear sister, the gentle, humble, saintly Duchess de Guiche, not content with robbing him of his office, had the effrontery to ask him to use his influence with the King to obtain for the Duke de Guiche a *brevet-de-retenue* of 500,000 livres on his new appointment. Boufflers, though beside himself with grief and vexation, was wise enough not to make a scene ; he asked for the *brevet-de-retenue*, and the King granted it at once, still by way of a personal favour to himself. Neither Boufflers nor his wife ever forgave the Duke de Guiche, and the Duchess still less ; but, like sensible people, they would not quarrel with them openly when it could be of no use, and they kept up outward appearances with them and all the Noailles family. The King tried to console the Marshal, like a child, by giving him a toy ; he told him to keep the quarters of the Colonel of the Guards wherever he went, and to retain the standards of the regiment in his coat-of-arms.

M. de Duras' government of Franche-Comté was given to Tallard, to the astonishment and scandal of everybody. The Duke of Orleans thereupon observed that it was quite right to give something to the man who had lost every-

thing. As he said it on the spur of the moment, and out loud, his remark flew from mouth to mouth ; the King was by no means pleased at it.

A few days later the King gave the little Count de la Marche, a very young child of the Prince of Conti, a pension of 40,000 livres. It seemed a prodigious gift, and was so for that time. Nowadays, compared with the sums which the Princes of that House have amassed since the King's death, it would seem a mere drop of water.

The King was dissatisfied with the Republic of Venice for various reasons ; since Charmont's return he had sent no Ambassador there, and had even refused an audience to the Venetian Ambassador. By dint of flattery and assurances of respect, which were not much to be trusted, the Venetians managed to make their peace with him. The Abbé de Pomponne was growing old in his post of Almoner ; the King had spoken favourably of him, but said at the same time that a Bishop of the name of Arnaud ¹ would be disagreeable to him ; and he would not admit him to the episcopate. He had, therefore, to turn his eyes in another direction. Pomponne, his father, had, with the King's permission, allowed him to see the papers of the Foreign Office ; and he continued to do so under his brother-in-law, Torcy ; moreover, he had already been to Rome and other Italian Courts. These considerations caused him to be selected for the Venetian Embassy, and he gave up his office of Almoner.

Puysieux had returned not long before on leave from Switzerland, where he had been very successful as Ambassador. He was the grandson of Puysieux, Secretary of State ; his grandmother was by birth an Etampes, sister to M. de Valencey, who was made a Knight of the Order in 1619. She became a widow in 1640, but only died in 1677, at the age of eighty. She was very intimate with the Queen-Regent ; the King and Monsieur, during their childhood, were continually in her house ; and the King treated her with distinction and consideration as long as she lived. She was magnificent in her expenditure, and ruined herself and her children. At that time it was the fashion for ladies of all ages to wear a quantity of Genoese

¹ On account of his relation, Antoine Arnauld, the celebrated theologian, who, from his retirement at Port-Royal, defended the Jansenists so ably against the Jesuits.

point-lace, which was extremely dear ; in one year Madame de Puysieux destroyed more than 100,000 crowns' worth of it by gnawing what she wore round her head and arms. M. de Sillery, her eldest son, married a daughter of M. de la Rochefoucauld, so well known by his wit, and by the part he played during the minority of Louis XIV. Sillery was ruined, and saw little service with the army ; M. de la Rochefoucauld, his brother-in-law, took him and his wife to live at Liancourt, where they died. They left several children ; the Puysieux of whom I am now speaking was the eldest.

He was a little man, very stout and stumpy, full of wit, thoroughly cheerful, polite, and respectful, and the best man in the world. He had great taste ; and much information, though very modest about it ; he was excellent company, and had an immense repertory of curious anecdotes ; everybody liked him. He served with the army as long as he could, but M. de Louvois took a dislike to him, and stopped his promotion. He was on very good terms with the King, who had a kindly remembrance of his grandmother. M. de la Rochefoucauld procured for him the post of Ambassador to Switzerland, and through his influence and his own familiarity with the King he obtained the privilege, never granted to any other Ambassador, of having a private audience of the King, on his return. I may remark that Torcy was the only Minister with whom M. de la Rochefoucauld was on a footing of friendship and familiarity. All this preface is necessary to make the story I am about to relate intelligible.

Puysieux came back from Switzerland just after the return of the Court from Fontainebleau, and had a very gracious reception at his private audience. As he knew the King well, and had plenty of wit, he suddenly resolved to make the most of his opportunities ; when the King, in a friendly way, expressed his satisfaction with his conduct in Switzerland, he asked him if he was really pleased with him, so that he could reckon on it, or whether it was only talk. The King assured him that he really meant what he said ; whereupon Puysieux, in a jovial and confident manner, said that was all very well, but for his part he was not at all pleased with His Majesty. " And why not, Puysieux ? " said the King. " Because, Sir, although you are the most honourable man in your kingdom, you have

nevertheless, broken your word to me for more than fifty years ! ” “ How is that, Puysieux, how is that ? ” said the King. “ How is that, Sir ! ” replied Puysieux. “ Your Majesty has a good memory, and you cannot have forgotten that one day, when I had the honour of playing at blindman’s buff with you at my grandmother’s house, you put your blue ribbon round my neck, in order to disguise yourself better ; and when I returned it to you after the game was over, you promised that you would give me one when you were your own master ! It is a long time since you became master, beyond all dispute, but that blue ribbon has not yet arrived at its destination.” The King remembered the incident perfectly ; he laughed, and told Puysieux he was quite right, he would keep his word, and hold a chapter of the Order so that he might be received on New Year’s Day. And he gave directions at once for holding a Chapter, announcing that it was for Puysieux. This is not a very important story, but it is amusing. It is a very singular one to be told of so grave and imposing a sovereign as Louis XIV ; and little court anecdotes like this are not without interest.

Here is one of more importance, the effects of which are still felt by the State. Pontchartrain, Secretary of State for the Marine Department, was the tormentor of the Navy, as he was of every one who came under his cruel yoke. He was a man of ability and industry, but clumsy in everything, disagreeable and pedantic to the last degree ; there was nothing he liked so much as teaching people their own business. He had a thoroughly bad heart, he liked evil for its own sake ; he was jealous even of his own father, who used to complain of it bitterly to his intimate friends ; a cruel tyrant to his wife, who, besides being very intelligent, was sweet-tempered, agreeable, and virtuous, and idolised by the Court ; he treated even his mother with barbarity ; in short, he was a monster. It was a constant source of annoyance to him that there should be such a person as an Admiral of France, and it infuriated him that a bastard son of the King should hold that office. He did all he could to prevent the Count de Toulouse from discharging his duty properly ; he threw all kinds of impediments in his way ; tried to keep him out of the command of a fleet, and, failing in that, spared no pains to make his fleet useless, as he had succeeded in doing the

previous year. He disputed his privileges and authority whenever he could, and managed to deprive him of some which had never before been called in question.

It was a bold course to pursue ; much bolder against a son of the King's person than against a Son of France ; but he contrived to get hold of the King by his weak side ; he put the feelings of the master into the scale to counter-balance those of the father ; he identified himself with the King, and made him believe that the question lay between the authority of the Admiral and his own. The whole Navy was indignant, for the Count de Toulouse was extremely popular, whereas Pontchartrain was detested. Marshal de Cœuvres, M. d'O, and many distinguished officers urged the Count to ruin Pontchartrain on his return, by showing the King clearly how the public service had suffered through his malice and mismanagement. This danger had been foreseen by Pontchartrain's wise father, and even by his wife and mother ; warnings of a coming storm reached them from all quarters ; Pontchartrain himself became aware of it by the manner in which he was received by the Admiral and the principal naval officers on their return. He was as abject in danger as he was presumptuous in good fortune ; he left no means untried to avert his fall, but met with nothing but contempt.

At last the day came when the Count de Toulouse was to have a private audience of the King, at which he intended to make a full report of everything concerning the Navy, and do his best to overthrow Pontchartrain. Madame de Pontchartrain overcame her natural timidity so far as to seek out the Count in the apartments of the Duchess of Orleans, and prevail upon him to give her a private interview. She burst into tears ; admitted her husband's misdeeds ; but, pleading the wretched state to which she would be reduced if he were treated as he deserved, she so far disarmed the Admiral that she extracted a promise from him to overlook the past, provided that Pontchartrain gave him no cause of complaint for the future. He confessed afterwards that he could not resist Madame de Pontchartrain's tears, and that his resolution melted away at the thought of that poor woman's fate in the power of an infuriated Cyclops, who, in his enforced retirement, would have nothing to do but torment her. So Pontchartrain was saved ; but it cost the State dear. He was so

terrified by the danger which he had escaped that he determined to reduce the Navy to such a condition that the services of the Admiral should never be required at sea. He carried out his determination, as was clearly proved afterwards ; but, though the Navy was ruined, he did not become poorer. The Count de Toulouse never put to sea again ; only weak squadrons were sent out at long intervals. Pontchartrain had the impudence to boast of it in my presence.

About the beginning of November a man died on the Flemish frontier who pleased all his relations by doing so ; I mean Caylus,¹ brother to the Bishop of Auxerre, and first cousin to Harcourt. He had married the daughter of Vilette, Lieutenant-General in the Navy, and cousin to Madame de Maintenon, who always treated Madame de Caylus as her own niece. There never was a more fascinating person than Madame de Caylus, more graceful, or more witty, more lively and amusing ; no one ever had so expressive, so intelligent, or so charming a face. Madame de Maintenon could not do without her ; she was so fond of her that she even shut her eyes to her conduct, respecting which she had formerly been fully informed by Madame de Montchevreuil ; it had undergone no real improvement, and still attracted public attention from time to time. Caylus, who had for many years been stupefied with wine and brandy, was kept serving on the frontier, winter and summer, to prevent him from coming near his wife or the Court ; and so long as he could be perpetually drunk he was quite satisfied. His death was, therefore, a relief to his wife and his nearest relations, and they made no secret of it.

Madame de Caylus used to escape from Madame de Maintenon's society as often as she could to that of Madame la Duchesse, which she found more amusing. She was fond of high play, which she could not well afford ; she liked the pleasures of the table even better, and was a most charming guest. She was an admirable mimic, and surpassed the best actresses in comedy ; she was particularly good in *Esther* and *Athalie*, which were acted before the King. But he never liked her ; he was always

¹ Saint-Simon spells this name Quailus ; but the editor thinks it best to retain the usual spelling. Madame de Caylus left some interesting Memoirs.

stiff and sometimes severe in his behaviour to her ; it was a cause of great surprise and grief to Madame de Maintenon. I have perhaps spoken at too great length about Madame de Caylus, who became in the end a sort of personage, after a long reverse of fortune. This reverse had already occurred at the time of her husband's death ; it was occasioned by several acts of imprudence. She had been banished from the Court for three or four years, and reduced to living at Paris.

The King, who did not care for any dignity except his own, and liked his Court to be majestic, always regretted the assemblies which the Queen, his mother, used to hold. Their splendour came to an end with her death ; he tried to keep them up under the Queen, his wife, but her stupidity and strange manner of talking soon extinguished them. He tried to revive them again after her death, under the Dauphiness, but they were interrupted by her frequent illnesses, and the long one which lasted from the birth of her youngest child up to her death put an end to them altogether. The King thought at this time that the Duchess of Burgundy was old enough to hold them. He therefore ordained that every Tuesday, the day on which all the foreign Ministers are at Versailles, the Duchess of Burgundy should dine alone, served by her Gentlemen-in-Waiting ; and that afterwards she should hold an assembly at which the Duchess of Orleans, the Princesses of the Blood, and all the ladies, whether they had a right to be seated or not, should be present, together with all the *seigneurs* of the Court. This order came into force about the middle of November, and the assemblies were held for some time. But the Princess, who was very young and lively, and still timid in public, had not the art of entertaining these large gatherings and making them go off well, and she disliked ceremony. By degrees she dropped the assemblies, and they have never since been revived.

The worthy Madame de Gamaches, widow of the Knight of the Order of that name, died, over eighty years of age. She was an amiable and clever woman, who had lived in the best society ; she retained her mind, her bodily health, and her friends, up to the last. She had been a great friend of Madame de Longueville, and in the intimate confidence of the Princess of Conti, *née* Martinozzi. I have heard my father say that she used to come every week

with the Princess to dine with his first wife, who was the Princess of Conti's greatest friend. He used to dine elsewhere on those days, and the three ladies dined by themselves, with a bell on the table, and spent the afternoon together. Both the Princess and Madame de Gamaches were very beautiful. I found at La Ferté two charming miniature portraits of them, set as earrings, which I have carefully preserved.

The old Duke de Gesvres died at last, and relieved his family from a cruel tormentor. His one object in life had been to ruin his children, and he succeeded in it perfectly. I have already said so much of this monster that I need add nothing now.

The President Payen, a man of wit and good company, who had lived to a certain extent in the society of the Court, was staying about this time with Armenonville at Rambouillet, the place which he afterwards sold to the Count de Toulouse. He had occasion to go outside into the courtyard for a minute or two before supper; and, having great prominent eyes which saw nothing, he fell into the moat. He was picked up dead, his skull having been fractured on the ice. His death was much regretted; he was old, and unmarried.

Bouligneux, Lieutenant-General, and Wartigny, *maréchal-de-camp*, were killed in Italy; both of them very brave men, but both very eccentric. The previous winter several wax masks had been made, representing persons well known at Court; they were worn under other masks, so that, when the wearer unmasked himself, the spectators were taken in, thinking they saw his face, whereas his real one, which was quite different, was underneath; this joke caused a good deal of amusement. This winter these masks were again brought out; they were all quite fresh and in good order, just as they had been put away at the time of the Carnival, but, to the surprise of everybody, those of Bouligneux and Wartigny, though retaining their perfect resemblance, had the pallor and drawn appearance of persons just dead. They were brought out at a ball, and caused such horror that an attempt was made to freshen them up with rouge; but the colour disappeared at once, and the drawn appearance could not be remedied. At last these two masks were thrown away. It seemed such an extraordinary portent that I think it worth recording;

though I certainly should not venture to do so if the whole Court had not witnessed it as well as myself.

On the 18th of October the Duchess d'Aiguillon died at Paris ; she was a sister of the Duke de Richelieu, and unmarried. She was one of the most extraordinary persons in the world, with a good deal of ability. Her character was a mixture of vanity and humility, and her life was spent in alternations between the great world and complete retirement. She managed her affairs so badly (though she put them on a better footing afterwards), that at one time she had to give up her carriage and horses. If she had chosen, she might have got her friends to drive her out when she wanted to pay visits, or she might have been carried in a sedan-chair ; not a bit of it ; she used to go out in one of those wheeled chairs drawn by a man, and pushed from behind by a little boy, which she hired at the corner of the street. With this equipage she went one day to see Monsieur at the Palais-Royal, and told her chairman to go in. The guard at the gate stopped him ; it was no use his talking, they would not let him enter. Madame d'Aiguillon listened to the dispute without saying a word ; when she saw that she could not go in she quietly told her chairman to take her to the Rue St. Honoré. There she stopped at the first draper's shop, bought some red cloth, which she adjusted to her wheel-chair like a hammer-cloth, and immediately returned to the Palais-Royal. The guards, greatly surprised at seeing this ornament on such a carriage, asked what it meant. Then Madame d'Aiguillon announced herself, and told her chairman, in an authoritative way, to go forward. The guards made no more difficulties, and she got out at the foot of the great staircase. The whole Palais-Royal was assembled to see her, and Monsieur and all his Court ran to the windows to look at this fine carriage with its hammer-cloth. Madame d'Aiguillon found it so much to her liking that she left the cloth on it, and used it so adorned for several years, till she could set up her carriage again. Several times she took the veil as a novice at the Convent of the Holy Sacrament, in the Rue Cassette ; but left it off again. She was a great benefactress to this convent, and acted as if she were its Abbess, though she never could make up her mind to take the vows altogether. She died in it, at the age of seventy, having lived there for some years previously.

The Marquis de Richelieu, her brother's son, younger brother of the Duke de Richelieu, was a ruined profligate, who had been obliged to leave the kingdom for a long time in consequence of having carried off a daughter of the Duke de Mazarin from a convent. She was quite beautiful, but became notorious afterwards for the dissolute way in which she behaved during her wandering life. He himself was a man of ability, but sunk in low debauchery and associating with the vilest companions ; one never met him anywhere. We were just sitting down to supper with Pontchartrain at Marly when it was announced that the Marquis de Richelieu wished to see him. The company were much surprised, but guessed that he had come on some urgent business ; for on such occasions any one was allowed to come to Marly and speak to a Minister, provided that he did not show himself and went away immediately. While Pontchartrain was away speaking to him it came into my head that Madame d'Aiguillon must be dead and that he had come to speak to the King about the succession to her duchy. If that was the case it was evident that he had no right to it, or at any rate that his claim was doubtful ; for the son or heir-apparent of a Duke never asks leave to assume his rank and title, but merely comes, like any other man of quality, to pay his respects to the King in a long mantle ; that is, unless he obtains permission to dispense with this ceremony, as most Dukes do now that all sorts of people have taken to wearing the long mantle. I was right ; when Pontchartrain returned he told us that Madame d'Aiguillon was dead, and had made the Marquis de Richelieu her heir ; and he had come to ask the King's leave to assume the dignity of Duke and Peer.

The King ordered the Marquis de Richelieu to send particulars of his claim to the Chancellor and said he would look into it after his return to Versailles, which took place a few days later. Cardinal de Richelieu, in 1638, had obtained the creation of the duchy of Aiguillon, with remainder to females, in favour of his beloved niece, Madame de Combalet ; and in the patent was inserted an unprecedented clause, to the effect that, if she died without children, she might select any person she chose to succeed her as Duke or Duchess d'Aiguillon, with remainder to his or her posterity. She died in 1675, leaving no children, and in her will exercised the powers conferred on her by this clause in favour

of her niece, the daughter of her brother. Her niece, who was never married, therefore became Duchess d'Aiguillon, and Peeress of France, without any dispute ; she had now attempted, in her own will, to exercise the same power in favour of her nephew the Marquis de Richelieu. I drew up a memorial to the Chancellor in which I submitted to him that the extraordinary power conveyed by the patent was conferred on Madame de Combalet only ; that Madame d'Aiguillon, having no children, could leave the estates of Aiguillon as she pleased, but not the dignity attached to them, which was extinct ; that the Marquis de Richelieu might therefore be the owner and *seigneur* of the lands appertaining to the Duchy of Aiguillon, but could not inherit the dignity of Duke and Peer.

The Dukes de la Trémouille, de la Rochefoucauld, and others also opposed the claim of M. de Richelieu. I wrote my memorial in a very short time, and handed it to the Chancellor, who had already studied the papers of the Marquis de Richelieu. He made his report to the King next morning ; and the Marquis was forbidden to assume the rank and dignity of a Duke, or to make any claim to them before any court of law whatever. The matter remained so till 1711, when it was again brought forward with no better success. It will be time then to speak of what became of it eventually.

Denonville, who had been sub-governor to the Duke of Burgundy, and had married his wretched son to a daughter of Lavienne, first *valet-de-chambre* to the King (by no means for her happiness), importuned the King so much that he was allowed to come and speak in his own defence respecting his fine harangue at Blenheim. The Duke of Marlborough allowed him his freedom on parole for some months. That Duke, after a tour round the German Courts, had returned to Holland, whither he had sent Tallard and all the prisoners of distinction. He made them embark with him for England, and took them to adorn his triumph.

Villars, who had almost put an end to the insurrection in Languedoc, was ordered to return to Paris, and the Duke of Berwick was sent to that province in his place. After his able conduct in Spain, and the circumstances which had led to his recall, it was not thought proper to leave him without a command of some importance. Thus ended the year 1704.

CHAPTER XIV

1705

Marshals of France and the Order—Villars made a Duke—Sortie from Verrua—Siege of Gibraltar—Maulevrier at the Spanish Court—Princess des Ursins permitted to go to Paris—Commotion aroused by her arrival—I visit her and am well received—Father de la Tour—Madame de Maintenon insists on removing her niece from his influence—Relapse of a penitent—The Duke de Tresmes Governor of Paris—Madame de Rupelmonde—A wife summoned to bed—Death of Courtebonne—Marriage of Mademoiselle d'Osmont—Quarrel between the Duke and Duchess of Orleans—The Saint-Pierres.

ON New Year's Day the Abbé d'Estrées and Puitsieux were received into the Order of the Holy Ghost, the Abbé wearing a violet rochet and hood like a Bishop. Harcourt was on duty as Captain of the Guard. While Puitsieux was taking the oaths the King turned and saw him, and it struck him as unbecoming that a man whose duty brought him into such close contact with his person should not be a Knight of the Order. He said afterwards that he thought of making Harcourt a Knight at once; then, reflecting that if he gave him the Order he must also give it to others, he spent the remainder of the ceremony in considering who should have it and who should not. At last he decided to give it to all the Marshals of France, and only to them; so that no one else could consider himself personally excluded. A good deal might be said in opposition to this false reasoning. The Marshals of France have never had a right to the Order as such; several of them never had it. The rank of Marshal is given as a reward for military merit, without any regard for birth, whereas the Order was instituted for birth alone. Of the nine Marshals who had not the Order at that time more than one was not of noble birth; and several of the rest, though they were noble, were not sufficiently so to entitle them to such an honour. However, the King conceived this idea and carried it out on the spot. He passed the word to the Knights on leaving the chapel

to come to his private room, as he intended to hold a chapter ; and thereupon nominated all the Marshals of France. M. de Lausun said that, like a great commander, he had come to a decision in the saddle.

Among the Marshals was Vauban ; if he was a gentleman by birth, it was all he was. Another was Rosen ; as we have seen already, the Prince of Conti inquired into his birth at the time of his journey to Poland, and found out that it was noble, whether sufficiently so to entitle him to the Order is more than I can say. Chamilly was of good nobility in Burgundy, though his absurd name of Bouton sometimes misled people into thinking that he was not well born. Châteaurenaud's family came from Dauphiné ; it cannot have been much, for they themselves can show nothing further back than his great-grandfather. He had well deserved the Marshal's bâton, but was not entitled to the Order. Montrevel, on the other hand, had no merit whatever except high birth ; he was a very proper person to receive the Order, but it was shameful to see the bâton in such hands. Harcourt, if really a Harcourt, as he claimed to be, was at least Montrevel's equal in birth.

Cattinat was the great-grandson of a Lieutenant-General of Mortagne-au-Perche, who died in 1584 ; apparently his family were peasants in that district, for no one ever heard of them before him. Directly Cattinat heard of the promotion of the Marshals he went to Versailles and asked an audience of the King. He thanked him for the proposed honour, but said he would not deceive him, he could not prove sufficient nobility. He was much displeased at his nomination, and with good reason ; he was of a philosophical disposition, and had become quite accustomed to living in retirement. He spoke to the King very respectfully, but coldly ; and it was thought that he was not sorry to have the opportunity of refusing. The King praised him, but did not press him to accept, as he had done in the case of the Archbishop of Sens, Fortin de la Hogue. The Court warmly applauded his refusal ; but he avoided the general praises, and went straight off to Paris. So this was the third man who refused the Order during the King's reign because he could not produce his proofs. Marshal Fabert, in 1661, and the Archbishop of Sens, were the other two. How many more ought to have refused for the same reason, not to speak of those whose proofs were very insufficient !

I now come to Marshal de Villars, than whom there was no man more completely and uniformly lucky of all the millions who were born during the long reign of Louis XIV. He was supposed to be the son of the registrar of Coindrieux. His grandfather, however, had the command of a regiment, probably of militia, and his claim to nobility in 1635 was allowed to pass muster. But every one knows what these inquiries into nobility are worth: those entrusted with them are not noble themselves; very often they hate the noble class, and seek only to degrade it. They hurry over their work; their secretaries do most of it, and make many noblemen for money; it is proverbial that they raise up more nobles than they pull down. The wife of this grandfather of the Marshal's was a Louvet; that is the family name of the Cauvissons, but the Cauvissons themselves are no great things.

His father, again, is said to have been a cornet in the troop of light horse commanded by the sieur de Peyrand; that is, a troop raised in the district by any one who would take the trouble to do it. He is also said to have been a Knight of St. Michael; but who could not be one then, and ever since, who had a patron with any sort of influence? They say also that he was made commandant of Coindrieux by the Duke of Nemours; but, besides that it is a perfectly insignificant command, it affords no proof whatever of his nobility. The best the Villars family have to show is a great-uncle of the Marshal, who was Archbishop of Vienne, and he was the nephew of another Archbishop. In those troubled times, Bishops were appointed without any regard for birth, even more than now; so this distinction of their family is none at all in reality. It is true they say there were two other Archbishops of the same name before them, making four in succession; but then, other people say that the first two belonged to the ancient family of Villars, who were *seigneurs* of Dombes, had large estates, and had made very noble alliances; that the Marshal's collateral ancestor was merely almoner to the second of these Archbishops, who took a fancy to him, educated him, and made him his coadjutor; and that they were not related at all. All this is a strange preamble to what follows.

The defeat of Blenheim¹ had been a crushing blow for

¹ Saint-Simon, of course, calls it the battle of Höchstädt; but in a translation it seems more convenient to adopt the usual English nomenclature.

the King and Chamillart. It was the first serious reverse the King had suffered ; its immediate effect was such that, instead of invading Bohemia and Austria, he had to think of defending Alsace, which was considered a very difficult task since the enemy had taken Landau ; moreover, the dominions of the Elector of Bavaria and his family were exposed to the vengeance of the Emperor. Tallard was a prisoner ; Marchin had only recently been made a Marshal, and seemed hardly equal to the situation ; Villeroy, such as he was, was destined for Flanders ; Boufflers and the other Marshals could not be employed, for various reasons. The King would not on any account allow a Prince of the Blood to command one of his armies ; Villars, therefore, was the only Marshal remaining, for Harcourt was by no means anxious to leave the Court, and Madame de Maintenon wished to keep him there during the present crisis.

Villars had been writing unceasingly to the King, to Chamillart, and to Madame de Maintenon respecting the mistakes committed at and after the battle of Blenheim ; he explained what he would have done himself, regretted that he had not been there, and, in short, behaved with his usual braggadocio. Madame de Maintenon did everything in her power to restore him to favour ; Villars saw that his letters produced a good effect ; he took the opportunity to insinuate that he had been deeply mortified by the King's flat refusal to make him a Duke. When the King had once been convinced that Villars was the only General whose services were available in the present crisis, it was not difficult to make him see that it would be better not to employ a man who was discontented and offended ; and the Minister and Madame de Maintenon induced him to promise that Villars should be made a Duke.

He arrived at Versailles on the 15th of January, just as the King returned from a drive to Marly. As the King got out of his carriage he told Villars to go upstairs and he would speak to him. Having changed his clothes, and gone into Madame de Maintenon's room, he ordered Villars to be called in ; as soon as he saw him he said : " I have not time to talk to you now, but I make you a Duke." That monosyllable was sweeter to the Marshal than the longest audience could have been ; he came out transported with joy ; but when he announced the favour he had just received, it caused general surprise, not to say consternation ; and

the courtiers, contrary to their usual custom, spoke their minds freely. Even the Grand Equerry expressed himself most strongly on the subject in public, as did all the Lorrainers. All classes were indignant at Villars' elevation : those who were Dukes already, those who aspired to that dignity, and those who were not in a position to aspire to it ; some that a man so poorly qualified by birth should become their equal ; others that he should be made their superior. So for once the general discontent overcame the usual caution of the courtiers ; the congratulations offered to the new Duke were cold and formal ; while he went about seeking for them, showing, in spite of his usual effrontery, great respect for some persons, and great embarrassment with everybody.

On Candlemas Day all the Marshals were received into the Order, except Harcourt, who was ill. Marshal de Villars' title as hereditary Duke had not yet been registered by the Parliament ; he had not even any property which could be erected into a duchy, for it was not till several months afterwards that he bought Vaux, the place on which the Superintendent Fouquet had spent so many millions and where he gave such magnificent entertainments. So Villars was only considered for the present as a brevet-Duke, and as such had no precedence in the Order ; he walked between Marshals de Chamilly and Châteaurenaud, and all three were presented by the Count de Solré and the Marquis d'Effiat. After being received into the Order they took the lowest places, below all the other Knights. Marshal de Cœuvres, as Grandee of Spain, took precedence of all the Knights who were not Dukes. I note these details because the practice had always been the same since the institution of the Order ; and it will be seen hereafter that there is a reason for remarking it.

A rather important action had taken place before Verrua. M. de Vendôme had been besieging the place for some time, but had made the mistake of not investing it completely, so that the enemy could send supplies and reinforcements to the garrison whenever they pleased. On the 26th of December the Duke of Savoy crossed the river by the bridge of Crescentino, under cover of a thick fog, and attacked our trenches from both flanks and from the rear, while the garrison made a sortie in force. A very sharp action ensued in which we lost many killed and wounded, including Char-

togne, a Lieutenant-General, and Imécourt, who was in command of the trenches ; but the enemy was repulsed in the end with great loss. They spiked twenty-three of our guns, but it was found possible to unspike twenty-one of them, and they were fit for service again next day.

The siege of Gibraltar progressed slowly. Six English ships appeared before it on the 24th of December, escorting seven vessels loaded with supplies for the garrison. Pointis attacked them, and captured four of these vessels, but the three others entered the harbour, and landed 1,000 men, besides ammunition and supplies. The King of Spain sent 4,000 men to reinforce the besieging army.

On the 2nd of February the Grand Prior attacked the posts of General Patay between Monte Baldo and the Adige, and completely defeated him, capturing six stands of colours and 400 prisoners. This success cut off the communications of the enemy with Verona, from which district they drew their supplies. On our side Lautric, with a detachment of 500 cavalry, was surrounded by the enemy, but, charging to the rear, he broke through, and carried off sixty prisoners. Unfortunately, he received a wound of which he died a few days later. It was a great pity ; he was a very good-looking man, clever, with a cultivated mind, and great military talents. Unable to bear the harsh treatment of his father, d'Ambres, he had made up his mind for several years not to stir from the army, and this sort of life had made him very studious and rather eccentric. He had become accustomed to it, though naturally he was fond of society, and had lived in the very best.

Marlborough was received in England with extraordinary honours. Tallard was not allowed to remain in London, as he had been formerly Ambassador, and had many friends there. He was sent, with other prisoners of distinction, to Nottingham, where they were allowed a considerable amount of liberty, though kept quietly under observation.

Tessé and Maulevrier, on their arrival at Madrid with letters from the Princess des Ursins, found the King and Queen of Spain well disposed towards them. The very first conversation was marked by great frankness on their part ; the Queen especially opened her heart to them, for it was by their means that she hoped to procure the return of Madame des Ursins to Spain. Tessé, after a conference with the Duke of Berwick at Madrid, was forced to go to the

frontier, to take over the command of the army ; but Maulevrier, who had come to Spain ostensibly as an invalid, remained behind. He had plenty of ability, and a thorough knowledge of our Court, and he gave the Queen very useful advice. He profited by his position as the only person of our Court to whom the Queen could speak freely of her designs ; she took so much pleasure in conversing with him that she induced the King to give him the *entrée*, so that through the King's apartments he had access to the Queen at any hour ; and he soon established himself on a very confidential footing with her.

She was anxious to obtain the recall of the Duke de Grammont, who had been guilty of the unpardonable crime of behaving coldly to Madame des Ursins at their meeting, and of opposing her return. The most urgent business came to nothing in his hands. That was not all ; the Queen persuaded her husband to do everything diametrically contrary to the wishes of the King his grandfather, and to neglect his advice ostentatiously. Our King complained bitterly of his conduct. Their plan was to tire him out ; to make him feel that nothing but the return of Madame des Ursins could put things on their former footing, and cause his authority to be respected in Spain as it had been in the early days. But they took care not to let him perceive the whole of their designs ; all they asked for ostensibly was that the Princess should be allowed to plead her cause at Paris.

The Archbishop of Aix, a bold, enterprising man, and a past-master in the art of intrigue, knew the King's character thoroughly ; he had kept up a sort of free intercourse with him ever since his return from banishment in the time of Madame, Monsieur's first wife. He was the first to break the ice on behalf of Madame des Ursins ; he spoke to the King of her unfortunate position, having been plunged into the depths of humiliation in consequence of an act of inexcusable folly, by which he meant to allude to the despatch with the marginal note. He exaggerated her penitence for her offence, and her grief at not being able to obtain a hearing ; after having used all her influence in Spain to procure obedience to the King's wishes, and having sought to please him in everything. The Archbishop acted throughout in concert with Harcourt and Madame de Maintenon, to whom he gave some very sound advice. The truth seldom reached

the King, shut in as he was by barriers of his own erection ; he was probably the only man in the two kingdoms who did not perceive that the arrival of Madame des Ursins at our Court would be the certain preliminary to her return to Spain with greater power and influence than ever. He was weary of the opposition which he encountered at that Court, and uneasy at the dangerous situation of affairs ; he yielded at last to the arguments so constantly pressed upon him, and granted the favour implored on behalf of Madame des Ursins.

It was a great shock to his Ministers. Harcourt made the most of this short interval. His feud with Torcy and the Duke de Beauvilliers was irreconcilable ; and he cared nothing for Chamillart, except as Madame de Maintenon's man. But the capacity and wit of the Chancellor pleased him, and Pontchartrain might be useful ; there was nothing in their departments to tempt him or make them suspicious of him ; they were both declared enemies of Chamillart, and the Chancellor on very bad terms with Beauvilliers. All this made Harcourt wish to make friends with both father and son ; it might change the King's idea of his being unable to agree with any of his Ministers, and help him in his object of obtaining admission to the Council. He cast his eyes on me as a likely person to bring about this reconciliation. I was surprised to find that he always greeted me with much politeness ; after a time he made overtures to see what my feelings were on the subject ; but I was very guarded in my replies to a man who was the enemy of my most intimate friend, and who, I knew, never did anything without some object. My guarded politeness was not enough for Harcourt ; the affair of Madame des Ursins was being quietly pushed on ; he was in a hurry to make friends with the Pontchartrains, so he turned to the First Equerry. He was already his friend, and had not my reasons for standing aloof ; he gave his services readily, and an alliance was quickly formed which suited all parties.

The Chancellor being on bad terms with the other Ministers, having little business to do with the King (what little there was being often of an unpleasant nature), and having altogether lost the favour of Madame de Maintenon, was delighted to make friends with a man like Harcourt ; and so was his son, who was generally detested and had not yet got over the fright given him by the Count de Toulouse.

But in forming the alliance Harcourt, who quietly made his own conditions, stipulated that Madame des Ursins should be comprised in it, and that he should be able to assure her of their friendship and services for the future. The Chancellor had no difficulty in agreeing to this ; Madame des Ursins was the enemy of his own enemies ; neither he nor his son was in a position to be called upon to break the ice on her behalf ; to promise her their friendship cost him nothing, and if she regained her influence she might be of use to him. The meeting between Harcourt, the First Equerry, and the two Pontchartrains, at which all this was settled, was held only a few days before the King allowed a courier to be sent off to the Princess des Ursins, telling her that she might come to Paris and the Court as soon as she pleased.

Although fully informed of all the steps which had been taken on her behalf, she was overjoyed at receiving this permission ; nevertheless, she remained as calm as when the thunderbolt fell on her at Madrid. Always mistress of herself, she assumed the air of a person who has hopes for the future, but has nevertheless been humiliated ; she had already warned her intimate friends to speak of her accordingly ; for she was particularly careful not to do anything to put the King on his guard or give him fresh offence. She made all her arrangements with the Court of Spain very deliberately, and showed no hurry to start ; nevertheless, she took care not to let her welcome grow cold, and started sufficiently soon to mark her gratitude for the favour she had received.

The courier had no sooner set off with the message for her than rumours of her approaching return began to spread, and in a few days they were confirmed. The commotion which the news produced in the Court was extraordinary ; only the intimate friends of Madame des Ursins remained calm and undisturbed. Every one perceived that the arrival of so important a person could not be a matter of indifference ; she was looked upon almost as a rising sun, whose appearance would change and renovate many things in nature. Many people who had never been heard to pronounce her name now boasted of their friendship with her, and went about expecting to be congratulated on her return. Others, who had always been intimate with her bitterest enemies, were not ashamed to give out that they were overjoyed ; conspicuous

among these were the Noailles, who were not deterred by their intimacy with the Estrées and their connection with the Duke de Grammont. They were delighted, they said, at the return of a person whom they had always liked and respected, and who had been their friend all their lives.

She arrived at Paris on the 4th of January. The Duke of Alba, who had thought he did well in attaching himself to the Estrées, tried to wipe out this blot by doing her all the honours in his power. He went some way out of Paris to meet her, with his Duchess, and took her to his own house. Many other persons of distinction went to meet her, among them the Noailles. Madame des Ursins had some reason to be surprised at this triumphal entry; but she had to respond to the Duke of Alba's attentions, in order to escape from his house without rudeness; it was important for her to be in a place where she could be at liberty. Instead of going to stay with her niece, the Duchess de Châtillon, she went to the house of the Countess d'Egmont, who was only her cousin; she preferred her because she was the niece of the Archbishop of Aix, who had spared no pains to serve her in the most stormy times. Both ladies had been married from her house.

The King was at Marly, and Madame de Saint-Simon and I were staying there; since Chamillart had made my peace with the King we were often allowed to go there.¹ During the remainder of the visit there was a prodigious concourse at the house where Madame des Ursins was staying; on the plea of requiring rest she closed her door to the common herd, and never went out. M. le Prince was one of the first to visit her, and when he set the example it was followed by all the most distinguished people, even by those who hardly knew her. Flattering as this throng might be, her thoughts were less occupied by it than by the necessity of finding out how the land lay, and making herself acquainted with many things which she had been unable to learn from her despatches. The crowd of visitors was attracted by curiosity, by hope, by fear, and by the wish to be in the fashion; more than three-fourths of them did not pass her door. The Ministers were alarmed by it.

¹ Nobody was allowed to go to Marly without an invitation; but people of a certain standing were expected to ask for one; and nobody was invited without asking. Ladies did so by presenting themselves at the King's supper two evenings before he was to go to Marly; men by going up to the King and saying, "Sire, Marly."

Torcy received the King's orders to call upon her ; he obeyed without remonstrance, seeing that her triumph was assured. The visit passed off with embarrassment on his part, and cold politeness on that of Madame des Ursins. From that moment she changed her tone ; instead of having to defend herself, as she had expected, she saw that she was in a position to become the accuser, and demand justice against those who had misused the King's confidence to expose her to such cruel treatment in the sight of two nations. What was happening surpassed her wildest hopes ; she expressed her astonishment to me more than once, and we joined in laughing at the meanness of some persons of distinction who had been most strongly opposed to her, and now hastened to show her attentions.

The King returned to Versailles on the 10th of January ; Madame des Ursins arrived there the same day, and stayed at d'Alègre's house in the town. I went to see her at once, for I had not been able to leave Marly on account of the balls which took place almost every evening ; but my mother had seen her several times at Paris. I had kept up a constant correspondence with her, and she had shown me some kindness. I had asked her to do something for Sandricourt, who was descended from my family, and whom I shall have occasion to mention again ; he was serving with the army in Spain, and at my request she had procured him some distinctions, and recommended him to the principal Spanish Generals. Madame des Ursins received me very politely, but not with quite so much openness as I had expected. I did not stay long ; Harcourt, who had cleverly abstained from seeing her before, came in, and I retired discreetly ; as I was taking my leave she stopped me to ask me to do some trifling commissions for her ; and then said, with her old air of familiarity, that she hoped to see me again soon, and have a chat with me at our ease. I noticed that Harcourt seemed very much surprised.

As I left the house I met Torcy, who, through his mother's intervention, had prevailed upon Madame des Ursins to accept his invitation to supper. She was satisfied with having humbled him ; the time was not yet come for her to quarrel openly with any one, especially with a Minister ; she had not yet seen the King or Madame de Maintenon, and till she had done so she could not be certain what course to steer. Next day she dined alone, and afterwards went in full

dress to the King, with whom she had a private interview lasting two hours and a half ; afterwards she went to the Duchess of Burgundy, and was some time alone with her. The King remarked that evening that there were still a great many things which he had not yet talked over with Madame des Ursins. Next day she had a long private interview with Madame de Maintenon ; several others followed at which both Madame de Maintenon and the King were present.

A month later a Colonel in the Spanish service, named Pozzobuono, arrived, sent expressly by the King and Queen of Spain to thank the King for his kindness to Madame des Ursins, and to order the Duke of Alba to call upon her with the same ceremony as he had used in his first visits to the Princesses of the Blood. After this it was given out that she would stay till April on account of her health, and to look after her private affairs. It was a great step in advance for her to be able to announce the length of her visit in this way ; it was not yet announced publicly that she would return to Spain, but no one doubted it ; she avoided the subject herself, and, as may be supposed, people did not care to ask her impertinent questions.

Two days after my first visit to her at Versailles I went back to her house, and she treated me quite with her old frankness and familiarity. She reproached me with having been less her friend since her affairs than I had been before ; that was sufficient to start an animated conversation, during which she spoke very openly and appeared to wish to tell me everything. I had to be on my guard a little on account of M. de Beauvilliers ; but she was too well acquainted with our Court to be ignorant of my intimacy with him, and too polite and friendly to put me to any embarrassment on his account. We were interrupted by the Nuncio ; but I saw her again soon afterwards, and she spoke to me in the strictest confidence of many things concerning the Spanish Court and Government as well as our own. She was extremely kind and attentive to Madame de Saint-Simon, and, as will be seen before long, it had the effect of turning the eyes of the Court upon us. I must leave the subject of Madame des Ursins for the present, and go back a little. But it must be borne in mind that the King's kind reception of Madame des Ursins was so pleasing to the King and Queen of Spain that they gave Tessé all kinds of military distinction and authority, besides their personal favour and

confidence; and to his son-in-law, Maulevrier, all the privileges of their Court.

Busily occupied as Madame de Maintenon was with the return and reception of Madame des Ursins, nothing could distract her from her anti-Jansenist mania. Madame de Caylus had profited by her banishment; she had turned to God in good faith, and put herself under the spiritual direction of Father de la Tour, afterwards General of the Oratory. This Father de la Tour was a tall man, with an agreeable but majestic countenance; he had an adroit though powerful mind; his disposition was firm, but winning; he was well known as a preacher and confessor. He was looked upon as a Jansenist, as were most of the priests of his house; that is to say, they were strict in their conduct, attentive to their duties, given to study and penitence, and hated by the Sulpicians and Jesuits. The Sulpicians hated them out of pure ignorance, the Jesuits from jealousy of their schools and seminaries; there were not many of them, but many persons of distinction preferred them to the schools of the Jesuits.

Since Madame de Caylus had been under the direction of Father de la Tour her time was altogether given up to prayer and good works, and she could spare none for society; she fasted frequently; yet she was always cheerful, though she saw nobody but persons of a religious disposition, and very few of them. God gave her so much grace that this worldly woman, who seemed to have been born for pleasure and to be the delight of society, felt no regret during this long period of retirement except that she had not quitted the world sooner; she never grew weary of her hard, monotonous life, passed in one long succession of prayers and penances. This happy frame of mind was disturbed by her aunt's foolish and ignorant zeal. Madame de Maintenon wrote that neither the King nor herself could allow her to remain any longer under the direction of Father de la Tour, who was a Jansenist and would ruin her; there were many pious and learned priests in Paris whose opinions were beyond suspicion, and she might choose any one of them she liked; she could not refuse this act of complaisance to the King, since he demanded it only for the sake of her own spiritual welfare and salvation; her husband's death had left her poor, but if she gave way in this matter with a good grace her pension should be raised from 6,000 to 10,000 livres.

Madame de Caylus did not yield willingly ; the fear of persecution had more influence with her than Madame de Maintenon's promises ; however, she did give up Father de la Tour, and took another confessor to the liking of the Court. Before long she became quite a different person ; she grew tired of prayer and good works, solitude was intolerable to her ; as she had retained all her wit and attractions, she had no difficulty in finding more amusing companions, and in their society she soon went back to what she had been before. She renewed her *liaison* with the Duke de Villeroy, which had been the cause of her banishment. We shall see before long that, in the eyes of Madame de Maintenon, this was a very slight offence compared with that of becoming a saint under the direction of a Jansenist.

Father de la Tour, who was remarkable for good sense, judgement, and self-restraint, was watched with a vigilance which nothing escaped, without ever making a false step. The King, urged on by the Jesuits and Sulpicians, was very anxious to do him an injury ; but he was heard more than once to exclaim against his wisdom with annoyance, but also with admiration, confessing that he had watched him for a long time and never could catch him tripping. His conversation was cheerful, often witty and amusing, but he never forgot his sacred calling. He was a man who inspired respect and consideration ; but in the end he fell, as we shall see, into a terrible mistake, into which he dragged Cardinal de Noailles and the Chancellor Daguesseau. He was a gentleman of good family, from the neighbourhood of Eu ; and had been a page to Mademoiselle.

The Duke de Tresmes was received with great pomp at the Hôtel-de-Ville, as Governor of Paris ; the Provost of the merchants made him a harangue, addressing him throughout as " Monseigneur." M. de Montbazon and the Governors before him had been so styled, but the title had been dropped afterwards ; the Duke de Créquy caused it to be restored, and the Dukes de Gesvres and de Tresmes, who succeeded him, profited by it. The same day the city gave him a great feast, to which he took a number of persons of distinction in the Court and in Paris ; they sat on one side of a long table in thirty arm-chairs, while opposite them, in thirty chairs without arms, sat the *échevins*, the Town Councillors, and the guests of the Provost of the merchants. The Provost himself sat at the end of the table, on the left

of the Duke de Tresmes, both in arm-chairs. The magnificence of this feast caused much talk ; it consisted entirely of fish, because it was given on a Saturday, the 24th of January. The Duke de Tresmes threw money to the crowd as he entered and left the Hôtel-de-Ville.

About this time, while her husband was absent on the frontier, Madame d'Alègre married her daughter to Rupelmonde, a Fleming, Colonel in the Spanish service ; she got rid of her cheaply, and the wedding-party was given by the Duke of Alba. She gave out that her son-in-law was a great nobleman, and very rich ; she made him assume a ducal mantle. Her daughter was as red-haired as a cow ; she had plenty of wit and cleverness, and an effrontery never equalled ; she thrust herself into the Court, where she managed to take part in a good deal that was going on ; her virtue was not particularly strict, and she played very high. When she thought her position sufficiently assured, she ventured to assume a hammer-cloth on her sedan-chair, in addition to her pinchbeck ducal mantle. It was only recently—that is, during the last twenty or five-and-twenty years—that any one had assumed the mantle, still a few had done so, and it was allowed, though they got no sort of advantage out of it ; but no one had yet dared to display a hammer-cloth without a right to it. This one was much talked about, but it did not last more than twenty-four hours ; the King gave her a sharp reprimand, and made her leave it off.

Madame d'Alègre was always boasting of the greatness of her son-in-law, and teasing the King to let her daughter go to Marly, or to give her a post as Lady of the Palace ; at last he told Torcy to find out all about this M. de Rupelmonde. He made inquiries, and discovered from trustworthy sources that the father of Madame d'Alègre's son-in-law had originally been a workman in the iron-works belonging to the real Lady of Rupelmonde, had risen to be manager, and become rich ; that he had ruined the real proprietors, ousted them from their estates, and taken their place as *seigneur*. Torcy told me so long afterwards in so many words. But the information came too late ; Madame de Rupelmonde was already received everywhere as a lady of quality, and the King did not wish to make a scandal.

I never saw such a miserable creature as this Rupelmonde ; he looked just like an apothecary's assistant. I remember

one evening at Marly, after coming out of the King's room, the Duchess of Burgundy sat down again to lansquenet; Madame de Rupelmonde was playing at the same table, when one of the Swiss attendants came in and called out, with his German accent: "Matame Ripilmande, go to bed; your husband is in bed, and has sent for you!" There was a general shout of laughter. The husband had really sent for her, and the stupid valet, instead of asking to speak to Madame de Rupelmonde, and getting her to come to the door of the saloon, had given his message to the Swiss. Partly out of shame, and partly from effrontery, she did not want to leave the game; but the Duchess of Burgundy told her to do so. The husband was killed soon afterwards. When her mourning was over the Rupelmonde intrigued more than ever, and by dint of audacity, insolence, complaisance, and love-affairs contrived long afterwards to become Lady of the Palace to the Queen on her marriage, and to marry her ugly, red-haired daughter to the only son of the Duke de Grammont, without giving her a halfpenny of dowry.

La Feuillade arrived about the beginning of January, and was presented by Chamillart; though received like a conqueror, he did not disdain to dance at Marly with the rest of us. He had left his little army in the valleys of Savoy; part of it was blockading Montméliant. His stay at Court was short and brilliant; a month later he had a conference with the King and Chamillart in Madame de Maintenon's room, like a General commanding-in-chief; took his leave, and returned. He detached Gévaudan to seize Pignerol, which was unfortified, and went himself by sea to attack Villefranche, which was soon taken, sword in hand; he then marched to Nice, which surrendered on the 17th of April, after a month's siege. The garrison retired to the citadel, which was not attacked; a truce was arranged between it and the town, to which the Duke of Savoy consented.

Courtebonne, an excellent officer, died. He was governor of Hesdin, and the King made use of this vacant governorship to give Madame de Maintenon a pleasure. She used to take over one or two of the young ladies who were about to leave St. Cyr and keep them with her, to write her letters and follow her everywhere. The King, who was always meeting them, often showed them kindness and arranged

marriages for them. One of these was Mademoiselle d'Os-
mont ; she was prettier and more intelligent than most of
them. They found a husband for her, d'Avrincourt, who
had served in Italy as Colonel of dragoons. He had some
property in Artois ; the governorship of Hesdin suited him ;
he paid 25,000 crowns to Courtebonne's children, and the
King gave him 100,000 livres. He was a clever and intelli-
gent man ; instead of letting his wife and himself become
strangers and forgotten, he managed to ingratiate himself
with the King, and made the most of his opportunities. He
became extremely rich, and even after the King's death he
contrived to get the command of a royal regiment of cavalry,
and to be succeeded in his government by his son. The
Duchess of Burgundy amused herself very much at this
wedding ; she handed the chemise to the bride, partly for
fun, partly to please Madame de Maintenon.

A dispute arose about this time between the Duke and
Duchess of Orleans. Saint-Pierre had brought his wife
with him from Brest ; he was a clever, intriguing man, and
a very good naval officer, but he had been deprived of his
commission because he refused to take public lessons in
naval matters from little Renaud, as the King had com-
manded. His wife was a very lively person, even more of
an intriguer than himself ; she was still young and pretty,
and had been seen a good deal about the streets of Brest,
her native place. I do not know what brought her to the
notice of the Duchess of Orleans, but she became her
favourite, and, though without any official position in her
household, went everywhere with her, leading the same sort
of life as she had done at Brest. She was a pleasant, cheer-
ful, witty person, and, under the patronage of the Princess,
she insinuated herself a good deal into society.

Saint-Pierre was a stiff, reserved man who prided himself
on his reading, wisdom, and philosophy. Except that he
made no pretence of piety, he and his wife were, in a lower
degree, an exact reproduction of M. and Madame d'O, with
whom they were very intimate. The Duke of Orleans did
not care much about them ; the self-importance of the
husband was not to his liking, and he thought the frisky
character and humble position of his wife made her an
unsuitable person to be the favourite companion of the
Duchess of Orleans. They wanted a place, no matter at
what price, to give them some sort of assured position.

Liscoët, commander of the Duke's Swiss guards, died ; the post is lucrative. The Saint-Pierres tried to get it, and the Duchess of Orleans declared that the Duke had promised that she should dispose of it. Nancré, a man of ability and cultivated mind, who had retired from the service as Lieutenant-Colonel in disgust at not getting further promotion, had made the acquaintance of the Duke at some of his parties at Paris ; he had the support of the Abbé Dubois and Canillac, and the Duke gave the post to him. The Saint-Pierre woman made a great outcry, and shed floods of tears ; her husband assumed a cold, disdainful air, and said the matter concerned the Duchess of Orleans, who quarrelled with the Duke about it. She never forgave Nancré, and, though it seems an absurd thing to say, Saint-Pierre never forgave the Duke of Orleans, notwithstanding that he got a better post afterwards and had hardly ever taken the trouble to pay his respects to him.

This episode in the life of the Palais-Royal seems very trivial and out of place here, but it will be seen later on that I could not omit it. The best of it was that Saint-Pierre, without giving himself the trouble to ask for it, received from the Duke of Orleans an addition of 4,000 livres to a pension of 5,000 which the Duchess had already obtained for him ; and yet the Duke found no more favour in his sight than before.

Talking of pecuniary favours, Grignan, who had incurred heavy debts while commanding in Provence, obtained a *brevet-de-retenu* of 200,000 livres on his lieutenancy of that province. He and his wife, seeing themselves without a son, teased his brother the Chevalier de Grignan¹ into marrying Mademoiselle d'Oraison. He was a very sensible man, of much ability and knowledge ; he was much esteemed, and had many friends. He had been forced to leave the service by almost incessant attacks of gout ; he had distinguished himself as a soldier, and would have played a leading part at Court. He had retired long since to Provence, and never left it. The marriage proved quite useless, for no children came of it ; but there was no fear of their house becoming extinct, for there were several other branches of the Castellan family.

¹ Madame de Sévigné was very fond of him, and often mentions him in her letters.

CHAPTER XV

1705

Madame des Ursins procures the recall of the Duke de Grammont—Growing influence of Madame des Ursins—Her kindness to Madame de Saint-Simon and myself—Our position at Court improved in consequence—Court balls—Madame des Ursins and her little dog—Amelot appointed Ambassador to Madrid—The Chevalier Bourke—Magalotti and Albergotti—Death of the Duke of Brittany—A marriage in the House of Lorraine—A letter falls into wrong hands—Siege and capture of Verrua—Madame des Ursins loath to leave Paris—Maulevrier in Spain—His intrigues and ambition—His recall—Little Renault—Death of the Emperor.

MADAME DES URSINS, while enjoying a triumph at Paris which surpassed her utmost hopes, was making her influence felt in Spain. The Duke de Grammont met with nothing but rebuffs and mortifications. No business ever prospered if he had anything to do with it ; at last, in despair, he asked for an audience of the Queen, although the King was present at Madrid, hoping to succeed better through her. The audience was granted, and he explained to the Queen some very important and urgent business relating to the siege of Gibraltar. She listened to him quietly ; when he had finished she asked, with a sarcastic smile, whether he considered it fitting for a woman to meddle with public affairs, and turned her back on him.

Madame des Ursins, who wished to keep on good terms with the Noailles for the sake of Madame de Maintenon, was unwilling to ask for his recall ; nevertheless, it was important for her to have an Ambassador to her liking. Her design was to worry the Duke de Grammont into asking to be recalled ; and that is what happened eventually. The Noailles did not care about him personally, though, as we have seen, there was nothing they would not do for his son, their son-in-law ; but they wished him to be recalled in an honourable way. The Maréchale de Noailles conferred with Madame des Ursins, who promised to use her influence to obtain the Order of the Golden Fleece for him. She took

occasion to pay her court to Madame de Maintenon by showing that she could overcome her personal dislikes in the case of any one connected with her, pointing out carefully what a sacrifice of her own inclinations the Queen of Spain was making in order to please her. So this favour was promised to the Duke de Grammont, but it was not conferred upon him till he was on the eve of his departure.

The King returned to Marly, and there were many balls there. As may be supposed, Madame des Ursins was invited ; she was given some of the best rooms. Nothing could exceed the King's attention towards her ; he did the honours of the place almost as if she had been a foreign Queen on her first visit ; and she received it all with a gracious and dignified politeness which was a little old-fashioned, and reminded old courtiers of the Court of the Queen-Mother. Whenever she appeared, the King seemed to think of no one else ; he talked to her, pointed out things to her, asked her opinion and her approval ; and all in a gallant and flattering manner which he never laid aside for a moment. The frequent private conferences which she had with him in Madame de Maintenon's room, lasting sometimes for hours, and her long talks with Madame de Maintenon herself, caused her to be regarded by the Court as a sort of divinity. The Princesses flocked round her as soon as she showed herself anywhere, and often went to see her in her room. The servile eagerness to please her shown by those highest in rank and favour was astonishing ; even a look from her was esteemed, and if she spoke to the most distinguished ladies they appeared to be in raptures.

I used to go to her rooms nearly every morning ; she always rose early, and dressed and had her hair done at once, so that she was never seen at her toilet. I used to go before the hour for important visits, and we conversed with the same freedom as in old times. I learnt from her many details of public affairs ; I also learnt the opinion of the King, and especially of Madame de Maintenon, respecting a good many people. We often laughed together over the base flattery showered upon her by the most distinguished people, and the contempt which they earned thereby, though she was careful not to let them see it ; also over the insincerity of others who had done their best to injure her, and now boasted of their services and overwhelmed her with assurances of friendship.

I felt flattered by this confidence placed in me by the dictatress of the Court. It aroused attention, and caused a sudden rise in people's estimation of me. It happened that several persons of distinction found me alone with her in the morning ; and very often people sent with messages reported that they had found me there, and that they had been unable to speak to her. She often called me to her in the saloon, and at other times I went up and spoke to her with an air of freedom which was much envied, but which few people ventured to imitate. She never saw Madame de Saint-Simon without going up to her and saying something pleasant ; she always included her in the conversation which was going on round her. She would take her to a looking-glass and adjust something in her dress or her hair, as she might have done in private with her own daughter. Very often she would lead her aside and chat with her in a low voice, sometimes raising it, but only to say things that were unintelligible for any one else. People asked each other, with astonishment and a good deal of jealousy, how this friendship could have sprung up, for no one guessed our former intimacy. What annoyed them most of all was that when Madame des Ursins came away from her interviews with the King and Madame de Maintenon she hardly ever failed to go up to Madame de Saint-Simon, if she found her with the other privileged ladies in the first ante-chamber, and take her apart to speak to her. She did the same if she found her in the saloon. It made people open their eyes, and Madame de Saint-Simon received a good deal of civility in consequence.

The most solid gain for Madame de Saint-Simon was that Madame des Ursins spoke very highly of her, more than once, to the King and Madame de Maintenon. We heard afterwards from sources entirely unconnected with Madame des Ursins, and thoroughly trustworthy, that she spared no pains to serve her, though quite unasked ; she told the King and Madame de Maintenon several times that no lady about the Court was so well fitted by her character and conduct as Madame de Saint-Simon to be Lady of Honour to the Duchess of Burgundy in case that office became vacant ; nor one who, in spite of her youth, would discharge its duties with more sense and dignity, or with so much satisfaction to themselves and the whole Court. She told the Duchess of Burgundy the same thing, more than once ; and it did

not displease her, for that Princess had already thought of Madame de Saint-Simon in case Madame du Lude (who survived her), died or retired from office. The King and Madame de Maintenon had already formed a good opinion of Madame de Saint-Simon, like everybody else about the Court; but I am convinced that, considering the high opinion they had of Madame des Ursins, this testimony of hers made a lasting impression on them; in the end, as we shall see, it was the cause of our receiving favours which we would rather have dispensed with. Madame des Ursins did not forget to put in a good word for me; but it naturally did not produce so much impression in the case of a man. Her kind behaviour to us remained exactly the same till her departure for Spain.

I wish to say a few words respecting one out of several balls which Madame des Ursins attended; it was one to which, with some trouble, she obtained an invitation for the Duke and Duchess of Alba. I say "with some trouble" because no foreign Ambassador had hitherto been admitted to Marly, except Vernon on the occasion of the marriage of the Duchess of Burgundy, to please his master, the Duke of Savoy.

The ballroom was a very large, oblong room. At the upper end, that is, the end nearest the saloon, which was between the King's apartments and those of Madame de Maintenon, was the King's arm-chair, and those of the King and Queen of England when they were present. The Sons of France and the Duke of Orleans were the only men seated in this row; at each end of it were the Princesses of the Blood. At the opposite end sat the men who danced, among them the Count de Toulouse, and, when I first went to these balls, M. le Duc, who still danced at that time. Along each side of the room sat the ladies who danced, the titled ladies at the upper end of each side. Behind the King were the officers on duty, and sometimes M. le Prince, with a few of the most distinguished men. Behind the dancing ladies were those who did not dance; and behind them again, the men who were merely looking on; among them M. de Duc after he gave up dancing, and the Prince of Conti. The King of England always opened the ball with the Princess, his sister; the King remained standing while he danced; but on the second or third occasion the Queen of England begged him to sit down in future, and he did so.

The Duke and Duchess of Alba arrived about four o'clock, and alighted at the rooms of the Princess des Ursins, who had received permission to take them to Madame de Maintenon before the King went to her room ; it was a great favour to Madame des Ursins ; Madame de Maintenon never received foreigners or Ambassadors, and the Duke and Duchess of Alba had never seen her face. A thing was done for them which was not to be considered a precedent ; the King allowed the Duchess of Alba to take her place in the front row, just below the Princess of Conti, so that she might have a better view of the ball ; and Madame des Ursins was placed **next** her. At supper the Duchess of Alba sat at the King's table by the side of Madame la Duchesse, and Madame des Ursins next her. Marshal de Boufflers was ordered to take care of the Duke of Alba during the ball, and to ask the most distinguished of the courtiers to meet him at a private table, served by the King's officers. A similar table was set apart for the Duke of Perth and the English. After supper the Duchess of Burgundy invited the Duchess of Alba to play lansquenet with her. The King, at his *coucher*, gave the candlestick to the Duke of Alba, and said he was sorry he should be put to the inconvenience of returning to Paris. He talked a great deal to both the Duke and Duchess.

At the other balls Madame des Ursins placed herself next the Grand Chamberlain, and looked at everybody through her eye-glass, the King turning round every moment to talk to her. Madame de Maintenon came sometimes to these balls on her account, for half an hour or so before supper ; on these occasions she took the place of the Grand Chamberlain, who fell back. In this way she was next to Madame des Ursins on one side, and close to the King on the other, a little behind him ; and a constant conversation went on between the three ; the Duchess of Burgundy also joined it very often, and Monseigneur sometimes. What struck everybody as extraordinary was to see Madame des Ursins appear at these balls with a little spaniel in her arms, as if she had been in her own house. People could not get over their astonishment at a liberty which even the Duchess of Burgundy would not have ventured to take ; it was even more surprising to see the King caress the little dog more than once. In short, no one ever mounted to such a height of favour as Madame des Ursins. It was astonishing ;

knowing the King and his Court as I did, I cannot get over my surprise even after so many years, though I saw it myself. There was no longer any doubt about her return to Spain. Her long and frequent conversations with the King and Madame de Maintenon turned on the affairs of that country.

The Duke de Grammont demanded his recall ; the King and Madame de Maintenon, who had a secret grievance against him, and were by no means satisfied with his management of affairs, offered no opposition ; but it was necessary to choose his successor. Amelot was selected. He was a man of sense and honour, very able and very industrious. His manners were polite and engaging, though he was not wanting in firmness ; moreover, he was prudent and modest. He had already served as Ambassador to Portugal, Venice, and Switzerland, and had done well, making himself popular everywhere. He was a man of the gown, and therefore incapable of receiving either a Grandeeship or the Order of the Golden Fleece. Madame des Ursins wanted an Ambassador who would in reality be her secretary ; she thought she could not do better than choose a man of no family, without influential patrons, who had witnessed her triumph at Court, and would therefore be ready to submit to her will. His appointment was announced ; he received strict orders to do nothing except in concert with Madame des Ursins ; in point of fact, he was to be under her.

As the King had by degrees come to the conclusion that it would be best to let her have her own way in everything, she obtained a much more difficult favour ; namely, the return of Orry to Spain, on the pretext that his intimate acquaintance with the finances of that country would be useful to Amelot. It was hoped that under Amelot's supervision he would not be able to repeat the neglect of duty which, combined with the lies he told about it, had constituted his former crime. He was therefore forgiven, and started for Spain immediately after Amelot ; that is, at the end of April.

Madame des Ursins also obtained leave to take the Chevalier Bourke with her to Spain, in the character of Envoy from the King of England, with a salary of 6,000 livres, paid by our King. Bourke was an Irish gentleman, a Catholic, who from stress of poverty had entered the service of Cardinal de Bouillon at Rome. He was a man of ability, much given to intrigue, in whom the love of scheming and arguing

amounted to a positive disease ; but in spite of this he was a man of honour. He had made the acquaintance of Madame des Ursins at Rome, and she had taken a fancy to him. Cardinal de Bouillon employed him with success in several delicate negotiations, after which he retired from his service with a pension, and went to live at Montpellier.

Seeing Madame des Ursins reigning in Spain, he went there ; she made use of him in many ways, and gave him free access to the King and Queen. He found opportunities for exercising his talents for scheming on a large scale, and though his notions were sketchy and sometimes confused, he thoroughly understood the real interests of his Sovereigns. Needy as he was, he was not afraid to speak his mind to persons in authority ; to Orry, to Madame des Ursins, to the Queen, and afterwards to the King and his second Queen ; to Alberoni, and all the Ministers. They admired him and consulted him on all occasions ; but they were too much afraid of him to give him any regular office, and kept him very short of money. I saw a good deal of him in Spain, and profited by the acquaintance. He had a very pretty daughter, and sent for her and her mother to come to him in Spain ; they embarked from Languedoc, and were captured by a corsair. The mother was drowned ; the daughter was taken to Morocco, where she was detained for a long time, though well treated ; at last with great difficulty her release was obtained, and she was sent back to France.

Some time after my return from Spain, Bourke came to Paris to see this daughter, who was in a convent there. He found that Paris suited him even less than Spain, where he had at any rate been on a familiar footing with the Ministers. He confided his troubles to me, and told me that he was going with his daughter to Rome, to seek his natural King, and his old friend Madame des Ursins. They both received him kindly, and his daughter became Maid of Honour to the Queen of England ; but poor Bourke found no more scope for his talents at Rome than he had done in France or Spain. So this man, who was capable of great things, and had played a minor part in some important affairs, found the gates leading to the most modest fortune everywhere shut in his face.

Talking of English Catholics, King James on his death-bed had thought it his duty to perform an act of mercy or justice, I am not sure which. The Earl of Melfort, brother to the

Duke of Perth, had been his Minister ; but he had been banished to Orleans, and Middleton appointed in his place. Nobody thought much of Middleton ; he was a Protestant, very cunning and clever ; he kept up a constant correspondence with England, in the interests of his master ; so he said at least, but other people thought it was in his own, and that he was drawing the whole of his income from that country. It was only about this time that Melfort was recalled to St. Germain and declared a Duke, in obedience to the dying commands of King James. Middleton was alarmed lest he should resume his old office ; to prevent it, he went to the Queen and told her that the example of the late King, her husband, and his dying exhortation to his Protestant servants, had converted him to the true faith. He publicly embraced the Catholic religion, and completely regained the confidence of the Court of St. Germain. Melfort was not admitted to any share in public business ; but he and his wife enjoyed the rank and honours of a Duke and Duchess in France, like all those who had been created Dukes at St. Germain, or were so before they arrived there.

Several persons of note died almost simultaneously at this time. Madame du Plessis-Bellièvre, the best and most faithful friend of M. Fouquet, the Superintendent. She suffered imprisonment and a good deal of harsh treatment on his account, but her courage and fidelity to him remained unshaken. She retained her health, her faculties, and many friends in extreme old age ; she died at the house of her daughter, the Maréchale de Créquy, where she had spent her last years.

Magalotti also died ; he was one of those Italian bravos whom Cardinal Mazarin gathered round him, though he was very young at that time. He had made the acquaintance of the King in his youthful days at the Cardinal's house ; and the King always treated him with kindness and distinction. Magalotti was a man of fastidious and magnificent tastes ; he was much liked and esteemed, and had always been in the best society of the armies in which he served. He was a Lieutenant-General, Governor of Valenciennes, and Colonel of the Royal-Italian regiment, a very lucrative post. He was extremely handsome even in his old age, with a ruddy complexion, bright Italian eyes, and the most beautiful white hair. Louvois, who disliked him because he was a friend of M. de Luxembourg, made him retire from the

service, and also prevented him from being a Knight of the Order, though he came of a very good family at Florence.

Albergotti, his nephew, succeeded him in the colonelcy of the Royal-Italian. He was a man of more ability than his uncle, very brave, with great military talents ; his ambition was greater still, and he was absolutely devoid of scruple. He was a dangerous man to have anything to do with, thoroughly dishonourable ; he affected a supercilious reserve, and sometimes passed whole days without saying a word. His uncle had introduced him into the confidence of M. de Luxembourg ; by that means he got into the best society of the Army, which he made a stepping-stone to that of the Court. Through M. de Luxembourg he became intimate with the Prince of Conti. He was accused on very good evidence of having kept up secret relations with M. de Vendôme, when the latter quarrelled with M. de Luxembourg and the Prince of Conti ; after the death of M. de Luxembourg he took M. de Vendôme's side without disguise. M. de Luxembourg's son, the Prince of Conti, and their friends expressed themselves freely about his conduct in private ; but they did not break with him openly. Albergotti became one of M. de Vendôme's chief favourites ; through him he acquired the protection of the Duke of Maine, and consequently of Madame de Maintenon. It may seem that I have spoken at too great length about this artful Italian ; but it will be seen hereafter that it is worth while to know all about him.

Mademoiselle de Beauffremont soon followed M. de Duras, in connection with whom I mentioned her.

Seissac, of whom I have also said enough, ended his unworthy life, leaving a young and beautiful widow, who did not require much consolation. Their son died soon afterwards, and she inherited all his wealth. With his death the illustrious family of Clermont-Lodève became extinct. As Seissac had a fancy for never wearing mourning, no one wore it for him, not even his brother-in-law the Duke de Chevreuse.

The little Duke of Brittany died after a very short illness. The Duke and Duchess of Burgundy were deeply grieved, especially the Duchess. The King showed much pious resignation. Immediately afterwards, that is, on the 24th of April, he went to Marly, and chose his own guests, without people having to apply for an invitation as usual.

Madame de Saint-Simon and I were asked. The King had a violent attack of gout, which kept him at Marly for more than six weeks ; and ever since this illness his *coucher* ceased to be public, only those who had the *entrées* being admitted. There were no funeral ceremonies ; only the body of the little Prince was taken to St. Denis in one of the King's carriages, with an escort of guards, and pages bearing torches. The public, in Paris especially, were much grieved at his death.

A marriage took place about this time which caused some displeasure in the House of Lorraine. The Princess d'Harcourt had lost one son in Italy ; two months before this she lost another, who was on his way to Vienna to take service with the Emperor ; she had no daughters, and only one son left, the eldest. He had formerly received an accidental blow on the head, for which he had undergone the operation of trepanning, and it had left him extremely deaf. She did not like him, and, so long as she had other children, she tried to induce him to take Holy Orders. He never wished it, and when he became the only son his repugnance became stronger. She then wished him to marry, but neither she nor his father would give him anything. She looked about for a wife for him, but in vain ; at last she had to put up with what she could get. She used to go a good deal to Sceaux, to stay with Madame du Maine, who did not mind who her guests were so long as they would put up with her entertainments, her comedies, and the rest of her whims, and did not object to being kept up all night.

A certain Mademoiselle de Montjeu had insinuated herself there, on the footing of an obliging little person, highly honoured by being allowed to stay there. She was young, dark-complexioned, extremely ugly, with the wit of a devil, and temperament enough for twenty women, as she showed afterwards ; she was the heiress of a financier, and rich accordingly. Her father's family name was like that of a pointer, it was Castille ; to improve it he had taken the name of Montjeu, from a fine property which he bought. He was a *protégé* of M. Fouquet, and shared his downfall. When the enemies of the Superintendent saw that he would be sentenced to nothing worse than imprisonment for life, they turned their attention to subordinate financiers. Montjeu was in no little danger, and he was treated rigorously ; but he had made such arrangements that many of

the charges could not be brought home to him. The irritation of his persecutors was increased by their failure ; the King sent to tell him to resign his office in the Order ; on his refusal he was forbidden to wear the insignia. He had already spent some time in prison ; he was told that he would be sent there again, but he still persisted in his refusal. As a compromise, he was banished to his house in Burgundy ; at last, becoming weary of the solitude of Montjeu, he yielded and sent in his resignation. After that he was allowed to spend the winter at Autun, and finally to return to Paris. Bussy-Rabutin, who was also banished to Autun, often mentions him in his dull and pedantic letters.

Madame du Maine arranged the marriage, and gave the wedding-party at Sceaux. The Duke of Lorraine quarrelled with the Prince and Princess d'Harcourt about it, and forbade their son and daughter-in-law ever to set foot in his dominions. This was not the only unpleasantness experienced by the Princess d'Harcourt. She found that her daughter-in-law was more than a match for her. At first they got on wonderfully well ; then there were quarrels, but they were smoothed over by dint of suppleness and cleverness. At last an unfortunate accident occurred ; the daughter-in-law wrote two letters, one to the Princess d'Harcourt full of respect and affection, the other to a friend, complaining bitterly of her hard fate in being subject to such a Megæra as her mother-in-law, with whose folly and caprices, she said, neither her children nor her servants had ever been able to get on. She commented freely on the life and character of the Princess d'Harcourt, with much pungent wit, like a person delighted to be able to speak freely. But the addresses of the two letters were transposed ; the Princess received the letter intended for the friend, and was beside herself with rage. She had so little self-control that she could not hold her tongue about it, and the story became the joke of the Court, where she was feared and abhorred. She found no comfort in the family of Lorraine, who were furious at this low marriage.

The daughter-in-law, after the first consternation at her mistake, saw that a reconciliation was out of the question ; her husband was as impatient of his mother's yoke as she was, so they locked up their money, with which they had tried to keep her in a good humour, raised the mask, and laughed at her. The Prince d'Harcourt, always absent

and sunk in debauchery, cared nothing either for them or for his wife, and took no part in the quarrel. So the Countess d'Harcourt was emancipated, and made the most of her liberty. -

Towards the middle of March, Marshals Villeroy, Villars, and Marchin had consultations with the King and Chamillart in Madame de Maintenon's room, on the plans for the coming campaign; Villeroy was destined for Flanders; Villars for the Moselle, where it was thought the enemy would make his chief effort, and Marchin for Alsace.

Vendôme had been besieging Verrua ever since the 14th of October, amusing the King by frequent couriers, and promises which were never fulfilled. The soldiers were worn out by fatigue and misery, up to their necks in mud. The place had never been completely invested, and was in communication with an entrenched camp on the other side of the river, from which the garrison received supplies and reinforcements. The King, after a time, became uneasy, and sent Laparat, a distinguished officer of engineers, to see what could be done to hasten the siege, and report accordingly. Laparat was not on good terms with Vendôme, but he knew too well to report unfavourably of a General in such high favour, who would never have forgiven him, and would have set Chamillart, Madame de Maintenon, and M. du Maine against him. He took care always to be of the same opinion as Vendôme; but, after a time, the latter, who, though he did not care to show it, was really in great perplexity, let himself be convinced that the way to take Verrua was to cut off its communications with the entrenched camp.

It was the last day of February, so the siege had lasted four months and a half. The next night the fort of Isle was carried by assault, the enemy's bridge broken, and the communication between Crescentino and Verrua cut off. The siege lasted, however, for another month; it was the longest and most ruinous which took place during the King's reign. On the 5th of April the enemy beat the *chamade*, and asked to be allowed to surrender with the honours of war; but M. de Vendôme, who had got them at last, insisted on surrender at discretion. It took place four days later, after which the troops, instead of taking the field, had to go into quarters to recover from the effects of this long siege. Three weeks later Prince Eugène

arrived in Italy with strong reinforcements, to profit by the exhaustion of our principal army. Nevertheless, it was decided that Turin should be besieged; and it was not only decided, but the decision was made public, which produced unfortunate results.

Madame des Ursins was so well satisfied with her position at Court that she began to hesitate about returning to Spain. She did not respond quite so freely to the affectionate eagerness of the Queen, and turned a deaf ear to the little hints which were beginning to be given here. She would have preferred to reign in France rather than in Spain; she was flattered by the marked liking of the King for her society, and by the servile adulation which she received from persons of the greatest distinction; she began to fancy that she might acquire a position which would enable her to take an active part in public business generally. She kept putting off her departure from time to time on the pretext of her health or her private affairs. Her chief advisers were the Archbishop of Aix and her brother; she did not venture to confide all her visions to them, but they guessed what they were, and did their best to open her eyes to the truth. They told her plainly that, if flattering distinctions of all kinds were lavished upon her, it was merely because she was here for a short visit, and that she would find herself in a very different position if she remained permanently. They reminded her that her return to Spain was necessary to enable Madame de Maintenon to carry out her schemes for directing the affairs of that country; that if she refused to go she would be looked upon as a useless instrument, and would soon find herself as much neglected as she was now courted and flattered. Their counsel was that she should show just so much hesitation as would enable her to make the most advantageous bargain for herself, but yet that she should be very careful to avoid any appearance of yielding with a bad grace.

Madame des Ursins recognised the soundness of this advice, and made up her mind not to give up the substance for the shadow. She decided to return to Spain and resume her power there; she merely delayed her departure in order to make a favour of it. My intimacy with her enabled me to perceive what was passing in her mind. I saw all the successive phases of the conflict; the extreme

eagerness to return which she felt on her first arrival; the period of intoxication which caused her to hesitate; and her final resolution. I did not, however, learn all the details till later.

In the meantime, many things had happened in Spain. Maulevrier was the Queen's confidant in everything relating to Madame des Ursins; and, from his intimate knowledge of everything connected with our Court, was able to give her much useful advice. Owing to the absence of Tessé on the frontier, he was left alone at Madrid, and made the most of his opportunities. Thanks to the *entrées* which the Queen had given him, he was able to go through the King's apartments to hers at any time, as I think I have mentioned already. He used to spend hours with her and the King, very often alone with her; the Duchess of Monteillano was not the sort of person to be any constraint upon them, and, moreover, the King was aware of these *tête-à-têtes* and did not object. Both the King and Queen had the highest opinion of Maulevrier; he saw all the letters they received, and often dictated or wrote the replies. It was rumoured that he tried to make himself attractive to the Queen, and that he succeeded; certainly his long interviews with her every day afforded some food for scandal. He thought the time had now arrived for reaping the fruits of his labours; the fellow aspired to nothing less than a Grandeeship, and he got the promise of one. But as may be supposed, from what I have already said of him, he was too vain to be discreet.

The Duke de Grammont got wind of Maulevrier's intended promotion. The new favourite had treated him with contempt, as a man of no account, who was on the point of being sent away. He now lost no time in informing our King and his Ministers of the reports arising out of Maulevrier's audacious conduct with the Queen, which had given great offence to the Spaniards; and said that he would certainly be made a Grandee of Spain. Tessé heard of the murmurs and jealousy of the Spanish Court, and was alarmed; he feared the effect they might produce on our own; he sent a message to his son-in-law ordering him to leave Madrid at once, and join him before Gibraltar. At the same time letters arrived for the King of Spain from our King, speaking very plainly on the subject of Maulevrier; and one from Torcy to the latter, expressly

forbidding him, in the King's name, to accept a Grandeeship or any other mark of favour from the King of Spain ; combined with a very severe reprimand addressed to him, not as a cousin, but as coming from a Minister who was highly displeased at his conduct and intrigues.

The courier, after delivering the King of Spain's letters, hurried on to Gibraltar with that for Maulevrier. It was a terrible blow to this ambitious schemer, who thought himself already in possession of his reward. Neither the authority nor the persuasions of his father-in-law could keep him any longer before Gibraltar ; after a very short stay he returned to Madrid, ostensibly to report on the progress of the siege, but in reality to persuade the King and Queen to use their influence with our King to obtain his consent to the Grandeeship. Unfortunately for him, the Duke de Grammont, though on the point of departure, was still at Madrid ; he knew Maulevrier had been ordered to the siege of Gibraltar, and despatched a courier immediately to announce his return without leave. His disobedience was promptly punished ; Torcy was instructed to write to him to start for France immediately on receipt of the order. There was no help for it ; he had to obey ; he took leave of the King and Queen like a man in despair, and started. The best of it was that, when he arrived at Paris, he heard his wife was at Marly ; he asked permission to go there too, as husbands always had a right to do if their wives were there, and the King, not wishing to make a fuss, consented. Maulevrier's consolation was to find Madame des Ursins there at the height of her favour ; he hoped she would obtain his pardon, since it was for her, or rather for his own ambitious views, that he had quarrelled with Torcy and the Duke de Beauvilliers, his cousins.

In the meantime, things were going badly before Gibraltar. A fleet, bringing reinforcements and a prodigious quantity of supplies, entered the bay, escorted by thirty-five ships of war. Pointis was there with five ships ; he had remonstrated against being left in this dangerous position, but had received positive orders from the King of Spain to remain there. A battle took place which lasted five hours ; three of Pointis' ships were captured, and two, which the enemy dared not attempt to board, were driven ashore. The enemy afterwards landed all the supplies for the garrison without opposition. Our King received this bad

news on the 5th of April ; he had for some time wished to raise the siege, but the King of Spain persisted in it obstinately. On the 6th of May another courier arrived from Tessé, announcing that he had withdrawn all his guns and raised the siege. It was a week after this that Maulevrier arrived.

About the end of May little Renault was sent back to Cadiz with orders to remain there for the rest of the campaign. He was an Admiral, much trusted by the King. He always went by the name of "little Renault," for he was extremely small, though well-proportioned. He was a Basque, and when very young entered the service of Colbert-du-Terron, Intendant of Marine at La Rochelle. This Du Terron wanted to buy Rochefort, and the *seigneur* would not sell it ; out of spite to him he persuaded the Government that an excellent harbour could be made there, and good ship-building yards. He was considered an authority in such matters, and millions were spent there by his advice, so that he became the tyrant of the place, and of the *seigneur* who had refused to sell it. But when all was finished it was discovered that Rochefort was too far from the sea ; that the river Charente, besides being so shallow that large ships could only navigate it in ballast, had an inconvenient bend, so that vessels required two different winds to get up it. It would have been easy enough to find out these drawbacks beforehand ; but it is the curse of Governments, especially in France, that the interests of the public always have to give way to those of private individuals.

Du Terron found that little Renault was clever and industrious ; he had him instructed in mathematics and every kind of knowledge useful to a sailor. He soon knew more than his master, and became particularly learned in the arts of ship-building and navigation. He served in the Navy with distinction. M. de Seignelay set up a school for naval officers under him, and it was for refusing to take lessons from him that Saint-Pierre and other captains lost their commissions. Everybody liked and respected Renault ; he fought some successful naval actions, and his disinterested conduct did him much honour. The King gave him many confidential commissions, respecting which he reported to him direct. None of these things caused him to presume, or altered his character in the least. We shall see him rise still higher, but always the same.

Ragotzi continued to make progress on both sides of the Danube ; and Count Forgatz, having made himself master of Transylvania, was besieging Rabutin in Hermanstadt. This Rabutin was the page on account of whom Madame la Princesse was shut up at Châteauroux. She never left it, and to the day of her death never heard of that of M. le Prince, her husband ; M. le Prince, her son, kept up her imprisonment with the same rigour as before. The page made his escape, and entered the service of the Emperor ; he distinguished himself, married a rich princess, and attained the highest military rank.

While these troubles were going on in Hungary and the neighbouring provinces, the Emperor Leopold died at Vienna, on the 5th of May, leaving no children by his first two wives. By the third, sister of the Elector Palatine, he left two sons and three daughters ; the sons were Joseph, King of the Romans ; and the Archduke Charles, the pretender to the throne of Spain, who afterwards succeeded his brother as Emperor.

The Emperor Leopold was a prince who managed to reign without ever leaving Vienna except once, when the Turks besieged it, and he escaped to Linz ; at the time when the famous Sobieski so gloriously defeated the besieging army. He was mean-looking and ugly ; he had a simplicity of tastes which contrasted strangely with the Imperial pomp, but did not prevent him from carrying the Imperial authority farther than any of his predecessors, except Charles V ; nor did his mode of life, which was more that of a monk than of a Prince, prevent him from using any kind of means to attain his ends. It is only needful to mention the deaths of his grandson, the Elector of Bavaria, and of the Queen of Spain, Monsieur's daughter ; the strange object of the mission of the Prince of Hesse-Darmstadt to the Court of Spain in the time of the second wife of Charles II ; and the leading part which he took in the overthrow of James II and the Catholic religion in England, and the usurpation of the celebrated Prince of Orange. His personal dislike to war, to use no stronger expression, saved him from jealousy and distrust till it was too late to resist him. He always made war through his Generals, and was singularly fortunate in them. He was no less so in his Ministers ; his Council was the ablest in Europe, and he had sense enough to trust it. The general terror inspired by our King made Leopold

the dictator of Europe ; he was skilful and proud, always consistent in his conduct and designs, fortunate in his family and in everything.

The last Empress was very imperious ; he let her rule in small things, but never suffered her to interfere in public affairs. She was so much attached to him that when he was taken ill she would allow no one else to go near him ; she prepared his medicine, arranged his room, and did everything for him like an ordinary nurse. His private life was one continuous practice of religion, with frequent use of the Sacraments. He received them several times during his illness, and on the morning of his death. It is strange that, feeling his end approaching, and having set all his affairs in order, he sent for his band, which had always been his only pleasure ; he listened to it for some hours, and died while it was playing. The King of the Romans did not announce the news to our King for some time, although he was the brother-in-law of the late Emperor ; it was not till the 30th of June that the Nuncio brought letters from him and the Empress-Dowager. The King went into mourning in violet, but it dated from the day of the Emperor's death. The new Emperor behaved much more harshly than his predecessor towards Bavaria ; he immediately sent 6,000 men into Munich, contrary to the treaty which he had himself signed with the Electress.

After the surrender of Verrua Laparat was sent to Mirandola, which M. de Vendôme had been besieging for some time in the same way, without completing the investment, so that the garrison was constantly reinforced. He succeeded in taking the place on the 11th of May, the garrison surrendering as prisoners of war. At the same time news arrived that Prince Eugène had sent a body of 8,000 cavalry by forced marches to Lodi, and captured nearly 1,000 horses. Vaubecourt, a Lieutenant-General, hastened to meet the enemy with such forces as he could get together, and was killed ; he was a dull man, but brave, zealous, and honourable. His wife, by whom he had no children, had been much talked about. Marshal de Villeroy was in love with her, and at the opening of one of his campaigns was so vain as to cause his magnificent suite and equipages to march round the Place Royale, where she lived. She was the sister of Amelot, the newly appointed Ambassador to Spain.

CHAPTER XVI

1705

The King's gout—Death of Madame de Florensac.—Of Madame de Grignan—A conspiracy in Spain—Madame des Ursins makes up her mind to go—She obtains prodigious favours—A dukedom for M. de Noirmontier—The King consents to nominate the Abbé de la Trémouille to the Cardinalate—Character of the Abbé—Campaign in Flanders—Marlborough forces the lines of Heilsem—Negligence of Roquelaure—Malicious jokes of Lausun—Battle of Cassano—Vendôme's carelessness and presumption—A barren victory—Mailly, Archbishop of Arles—Quarrel between Surville and La Barre—Story of Fargues—Death of Ninon de l'Enclos—Courtenvaux—The King's spies.

THE King's gout prevented him from holding the usual ceremony of the Order at Pentecost, a thing he had never before omitted on the appointed days, three times a year. A thing occurred about this time which caused him some vexation ; five state prisoners at Pierre-Encise managed to stab Manville, the governor, and some soldiers who guarded them, and made their escape.

Madame de Florensac, perhaps the handsomest woman in France, died at the age of thirty-five. She was the daughter of Saint-Nectaire by a sister of Longueval, a Lieutenant-General, who was killed in Catalonia, unmarried. Her mother was a clever woman, who had been Maid of Honour to the Queen ; she went to law with her brother-in-law and contrived to make him out a criminal ; he was imprisoned for a long time, and when, after great difficulty, he obtained his release, he came to an agreement with her, and never married. In this way Madame de Florensac became a rich heiress. She was the object of many passions, and it was said that she was not always cruel ; but she was an excellent woman, and in spite of her beauty had a good and simple disposition. She was banished on account of Monseigneur, whose love for her began to be talked about. Her husband, a brother of the Duke d'Uzès, and the silliest man in France,

never perceived it ; he was passionately fond of her. She left a daughter, also beautiful, but not so beautiful as her mother, who has become Duchess d'Aiguillon, God knows how ; and perhaps the Princess of Conti¹ knows something about it too.

Madame de Grignan, an elderly and affected beauty, also died at this time, and, whatever Madame de Sévigné may say in her letters, she was very little regretted by her husband, her family, or the people of Provence.

Before the Duke de Grammont left Madrid a plot was discovered having for its object to murder all the French in that town and at Grenada, and seize the persons of the King and Queen. The Marquis de Villanez was suspected of being the prime mover in it. He had always been strongly attached to the House of Austria, and had evaded taking the oath of fidelity to Philip V on the pretext that it was an insult to show distrust of a man of his condition. They were so foolish at the Spanish Court as not to insist on it for fear of offending him, though all other persons of his rank swore allegiance. It was thought that sufficient evidence had been discovered to justify his arrest ; and he was sent to prison, first at Pampeluna, and afterwards, although no positive proof of his guilt was discovered, in the Château Trompette at Bordeaux. The conspiracy was widespread, and several persons were executed.

These important events seemed a sufficient motive for hastening the departure of Madame des Ursins. She had taken care not to let the Queen of Spain suspect that she felt tempted to remain, and had excused her long delay on the plea of her health and private affairs. She now felt that it was time for her to go ; Madame de Maintenon herself was beginning to be suspicious, and to wish to get rid of her. Something was said to her on the subject of her departure. That was just what Madame des Ursins had been waiting for. She said that she had been forced, in the most insulting manner, to leave Spain as if she were a criminal ; and it would be very difficult for her to do any real service to the two Kings unless she returned there with some marks of distinction ; it was true that our King had shown her the

¹ This Princess of Conti was Madame la Duchesse's daughter. She was in love with Count d'Agenois, son of the Marquis de Richelieu, and, having much influence with Chauvelin, Keeper of the Seals, got a decision from the Parliament declaring Agenois Duke d'Aiguillon. This was not till after the Regency.

utmost kindness and loaded her with favours, but these were private matters, unknown to the public, especially in Spain. If she was to do any good it must be made known that she did not return without a direct mission; and, the more important that mission was, the more essential it was for the King's service that she should be put in a position to discharge it properly. All this she said in the most simple and natural manner, with much eloquence and natural grace, and with the greatest attention to the effect produced on her hearers; it surpassed her utmost expectations.

It was at Marly, on the 15th of June, after an interview with the King and Madame de Maintenon which lasted more than two hours, that Madame des Ursins took her leave; but, like a clever woman, she obtained permission to see the King once more when he returned to Versailles. The fact was that, while setting them at ease as to her departure, she was unwilling to start till the favours which had just been promised her had been actually conferred, so far at least as lay in the King's power. She held off on various pretexts till all had been settled, and then had another long interview with the King and Madame de Maintenon at Versailles. After this she paid her farewell visits and said good-bye to her friends; she obtained leave to see the King once more at Marly, and that was the last time; she took her departure about the middle of July.

The favours she obtained were prodigious. The King gave her a pension of 20,000 livres, and a present of 30,000 for her travelling expenses. Her brother M. de Noirmontier, who had been blind since he was eighteen or twenty years of age, was made a Duke and Peer; and the King induced the Pope to make her other brother, the Abbé de la Trémouille, a Cardinal, although to procure his nomination he was obliged to consent to the promotion of the Duke of Saxe-Weitz, Bishop of Javarin, which he had always opposed; and moreover the two Crowns of France and Spain had to desist on this occasion from their usual claim to nominate a Cardinal apiece to counterbalance the Emperor's nominee. To make it clearly understood what extraordinary favours these were I must say something about the two brothers, and explain the terms on which they were with their clever and powerful sister.

I have already described M. de Noirmontier. He lost his sight from the effects of small-pox, and for many years

became a recluse. His only amusement was being read to, and, as he had great ability and an excellent memory, his mind became a storehouse of knowledge. His friend the Count de Fiesque induced him at last to receive company ; he soon made many friends, and his house became the meeting-place of a clique whose approval or disapproval was not a matter of indifference. He turned his thoughts towards marriage, but, though he was of high birth, his father had been only a Duke by brevet and had not transmitted his rank to him ; moreover, he was blind and not well off, so it was not easy to find a suitable match. He wanted a wife to be a companion to him and take care of him ; he resolved to be content with a moderate fortune ; and thought he had found the person he wanted in a daughter of La Grange, President of one of the courts of law, and married her, in 1688 ; but she died eighteen months afterwards, leaving no children. Madame des Ursins complained loudly that his marriage was a *mésalliance*, just as if their own mother had not been by birth an Aubry, their grandmother a Bouhier, and their great-grandmother a Beaune. Her objections caused a coolness between her and her brother, which had not entirely passed away when, ten years later, he made a second marriage of the same sort with a daughter of Duret, President of the Chamber of Accounts.

Madame des Ursins, who was then at Rome, was furious at this marriage. The quarrel between her and her brother broke out afresh, and was still kept up when she was compelled to leave Spain so abruptly. During her exile at Toulouse, she had time for reflection. Although M. de Noirmonstier was not on good terms with his sister, he was sorry for her downfall, perhaps more on account of the public manner in which it had been brought about than for the thing itself. She could not afford to quarrel with any one who might possibly help her, and, though she could not forgive her brother's marriage, she knew him to be a man of ability and experience, capable of giving good advice, and intimate with many persons who might be of assistance to her. So necessity on her part, and family pride on his, brought about a reconciliation. M. de Noirmonstier had some conferences with the Archbishop of Aix, and they became Madame des Ursins' chief advisers. They were on this footing when she arrived in Paris ; but, though she

felt the necessity of consulting him, she had not entirely forgiven him, and would not stay at his house.

Although she procured such immense favours for him and for her other brother, affection had very little to do with it. There was nothing she could ask for herself, she was wealthy and powerful, of high rank and position ; there was no way of dazzling the eyes of the public in France and Spain except by obtaining some marked distinction for her relations. This was the cause of a blind man without children becoming a Duke and Peer, verified by Parliament ; although he never stirred out of his chair. His wife, who had never even been presented at Court, went there to assume her *tabouret*, and to share for a few moments the triumph of her sister-in-law.

The Abbé de la Trémouille was a little hump-backed man, very ugly and very profligate ; he had gone into his profession in order to alleviate his poverty by some preferments, but he never learnt to adapt his conduct to it. He was clever, witty, and amusing ; but there was nothing solid about him, he lived entirely for pleasure. His poverty and his loose morals, combined with a natural taste for low company, led him to avoid the society of people of his own birth and position. This was not the sort of conduct to lead to the preferments which he hoped for ; at last, tired of waiting, he went off to Rome to join his sister. For love of her, Cardinals de Bouillon and d'Estrées got him appointed Auditor of the Rota for France, a position which demanded learning, gravity, and industry. He did not acquire the first qualification, the two others he never had, and his morals were no better than before. That in itself would not have stood much in his way at Rome, but his taste for low company, his buffoonery, and his love of gambling, in which he lost all he had and more, caused him to sink into utter discredit. To put the finishing touch to his ruin, he quarrelled with his sister by taking her husband's part in their domestic squabbles.

While he was on bad terms with her she became a widow. She claimed the right of mourning in violet ; Cardinal de Bouillon opposed her pretensions with great haughtiness, and, though he had always been very intimate with her, they had an irreconcilable quarrel about it. While at the height of his favour the Cardinal had introduced the custom in France for Cardinals to wear violet in mourning ; but Monsieur had been much displeased to see none but the

King and the Cardinals wearing violet, while the Sons of France, and even the Dauphin, wore black ; he spoke to the King about it so often that at last the King forbade the Cardinals to mourn in violet. This happened only a short time before the Duke de Bracciano died, and that was what made Cardinal de Bouillon oppose the pretensions of his widow with such heat.

I do not know whether the Abbé de la Trémouille took the part of Cardinal de Bouillon in this affair, or whether he sided with his sister's creditors in their disputes with her about her inheritance ; but it is certain that he opposed her on one of these points, and she was so angry that she determined to ruin him, and had him reported to the Inquisition for his debauchery. The Abbé felt that his case was so bad that he made his escape to Naples, to avoid arrest. Cardinal de Bouillon took his part, and with great difficulty contrived to smooth the matter over ; he returned to Rome, and his sister, satisfied with having given him a good fright, forgave him so far as to consent to see him occasionally.

The Abbé de la Trémouille was in this position at Rome, that is, completely dishonoured and generally despised, when his sister, for her own glorification, undertook to make him a Cardinal, though they cordially hated each other. She could only hope to succeed by giving the Pope a personal interest in the promotion of her brother, and this she expected to supply by overcoming the King's persistent opposition to the promotion of the Duke of Saxe-Weitz, Bishop of Javarin, and thereby relieving the Pope from the constant entreaties, sometimes mingled with threats, of the Emperor. But she knew that alone would not be a sufficient inducement to the Pope to make a Cardinal of such a man as her brother, who had so publicly incurred the displeasure of the Inquisition. The whole Court of Rome, and especially the Sacred College, would cry out against such a scandal. She therefore supplied another motive, by placing an additional Hat at the disposal of the Pope, at the expense of the Crowns of France and Spain. In this way His Holiness would be able to gratify the Emperor by making a Cardinal on his nomination against only one for the two Crowns, instead of one apiece, which was their incontestable right. So she set herself to deprive a Spaniard of the Cardinal's Hat without any compensation ; to induce the two Kings for once to forgo their claims, and to obtain from

our King a concession most prejudicial to his glory and interests !

These were no trifling difficulties which she proposed to overcome, but she did overcome them ; so eager was Madame de Maintenon to get rid of her and send her to reign, in partnership with herself, at Madrid. The necessary despatches were written and sent off before she left. She had no trouble with the Spanish Court ; as soon as she reported what had been promised her in France despatches such as she wished were at once sent to Rome from Spain. She also induced our King to speak warmly in favour of her brother's promotion to Gualterio, the Papal Nuncio ; after which there was nothing more that she could do. The rest had to be done at Rome, and it was not easy ; but she could not await the final result at Paris. She finally started about the middle of July, loaded with favours as no subject of her sex had ever been before, and thoroughly satisfied. Her reception in Spain may be imagined ; the King and Queen came a day's journey from Madrid to meet her. Such was the return of this woman whose downfall the King had planned with so much eagerness. Maréchal told me that the King had spoken to him of her overthrow with much complacency, in the presence of Fagon and Bloin, congratulating himself on his cleverness in separating the King and Queen of Spain in order to strike his blow at Madame des Ursins with more certainty !

Villars' campaign this year was worthy of the greatest generals. The design of the enemy was to advance by the valley of the Sarre, to take Alsace in the rear, and to penetrate as far into French territory as possible. Marlborough commanded an army in that quarter of over 80,000 men. Villars took up a position at Circk, where Marlborough did not venture to attack him ; and when he was reinforced by Prince Louis of Baden, Villeroy on his side sent strong reinforcements to Villars. Marlborough retreated to Trèves ; he sent word to Villars that he would have attacked him on the 10th of June but for the delays of Prince Louis, who only arrived on the 15th instead of the 9th as he had promised. Villars, relieved from all anxiety, sent a strong detachment to reinforce Villeroy in Flanders, then marched with the remainder of his army into Alsace, where he made a junction with Marchin, took Weissenbourg, and drove the Imperialists with some loss

from their lines on the Lauter. The enemy abandoned Trèves precipitately and retreated on Maëstricht. So, by his skill in taking up the position of Cirek, Villars completely upset the enemy's plan of campaign; and by his promptitude in taking advantage of the temporary absence of Prince Louis of Baden he carried the lines of Lauterbourg, which stretched from the mountains to the Rhine, and were a great impediment to our operations in Alsace.

Marlborough returned to Flanders, and, having succeeded in deceiving Marshal de Villeroy, made a sudden attack on our lines between Lawe and Heilisem, forced them, destroyed the entrenchments, and caused much disorder. They were negligently guarded by Roquelaure, who arrived late at the scene of action. We lost d'Alègre, the Count d'Horn, and several other officers of distinction taken prisoners, besides many killed and wounded. The rout would have been complete but for Carman, who formed square with his infantry and stopped the enemy; he was promised the Grand Cross of St. Louis at the first vacancy, with permission to wear it in the meantime, a thing the King had never done before for any one.

Marshal de Villeroy was a friend of Roquelaure's and did his best to screen him, but it was impossible to silence the tongues of the whole army; everybody cried out against him, and, shameless as he was, he dared not show himself to the troops. The King resolved to dispense with his services for the future. We shall see before long that he had a wife who was of great assistance to him all his life; to say the truth, it was the least she could do for him.

Before I leave the subject of Flanders I must relate an amusing story of Lausun's malignity. As we have seen, he was always hoping to regain his old familiarity with the King; it was only with that object that he had married one of Marshal de Lorge's daughters, and afterwards done all he could to arrange a marriage between the Duke de Lorge and Chamillart's daughter. Seeing himself no further advanced, he took it into his head, though he was perfectly well, to play the invalid, and ask leave to take the waters at Aix-la-Chapelle. Nobody believed that he really required it, but there are always silly people who like to be thought sharp because they really know nothing, and they thought there was something mysterious about this journey. So there was, but the mystery was not at all

what they supposed. He did not require the waters, but he hoped to make the acquaintance of the distinguished foreigners who flocked thither, to find out things from them, and on his return to report what he had heard to the King, and profit by it to have some confidential conversations with him. He found he was mistaken; the war had drawn away all foreigners of the class he had hoped to meet. The only one of any distinction whose acquaintance he made was Hompesch, a Dutch General, who afterwards rose to the highest rank, but at that time was not one of the sort he was looking for. However, for want of anything better, he talked of nothing but Hompesch when he came back.

He did not stay long at Aix-la-Chapelle, and returned by way of the army of Marshal de Villeroy, who was afraid of him, and gave him all military honours as a General who had commanded the King's forces in Ireland. During the three days of his stay with the army the Marshal showed him all the troops, and ordered some general officers to take him about. The enemy's army was close at hand; everybody thought a battle imminent, and that was the attraction which had drawn M. de Lausun thither. The officers who had been told off to do the honours took him very close to the enemy, and, being annoyed by his constant inquiries about everything, exposed him to a heavy fire with some risk of being cut off—a trick which might have cost them dear, for they were in as great danger as he was. Lausun was very brave, and, notwithstanding his impetuous disposition, he had a cool courage which enabled him to estimate his danger without being disturbed by it, and to look about him as calmly as if he had been in his own room. He soon perceived the intention of his guides, and amused himself by stopping and asking questions in the most dangerous places, till they would have been very glad to get him away; for they saw they had to do with a man who would take them a good deal farther than they wanted to go.

On his return to the Court everybody crowded round him to hear about the position of the armies. As usual he played the part of the modest man out of favour: the man grown rusty in retirement, no longer capable of describing what he has seen. Next day he went to the Princess of Conti's rooms to pay his respects to Monseigneur, who did not like him, but who, as he very well knew, equally disliked Marshal de Villeroy.

Monseigneur asked him a good many questions respecting the army, and particularly as to what had prevented a battle. M. de Lausun affected to be reluctant to answer; he confessed he had reconnoitred between the two armies and been very near the enemy's outposts, then, abruptly changing the subject began to talk of the splendid condition of our troops and their eagerness to fight. Monseigneur still pressed for an answer as to why there had been no battle. "Since you insist on my speaking, Monseigneur," said Lausun, "I must tell you that I made a very complete reconnaissance of the enemy's position, and of the ground between the two armies. It is true that I saw no brook between them, no ravines, no hollow roads, and no steep slopes; but I did see other hindrances." "But what were they?" said Monseigneur, "since there was nothing of that sort."

M. de Lausun still held off, repeating over again the impediments which were not there. At last, pulling his snuff-box out of his pocket, he said: "There was something which was a great hindrance to the feet; it was heather, not very thick certainly, not very strong, and there was nothing prickly mixed with it. Still, there was heather; heather as high as—what shall I say? (looking round him for a comparison)—quite as high, I should think, as this snuff-box!" Monseigneur and all the company burst out laughing, and M. de Lausun gracefully vanished; he had got all he went there for. The story went the round of the Court and soon spread to the town. The King heard it the same evening. That was all the thanks Marshal de Villeroy received for the attentions he had shown to M. de Lausun; and that was M. de Lausun's way of consoling himself for his disappointment at Aix-la-Chapelle.

Villars crossed the Rhine at Strasbourg on the 6th of August with the whole of his cavalry and two brigades of infantry, leaving the remainder of his forces in the lines on the Lauter. His object was to obtain forage for his cavalry, and, as usual, he did not forget to levy contributions; but Prince Louis of Baden did not give him much time. He crossed the Rhine, and Villars was obliged to recross it hastily to meet him. Thereupon, with his usual braggadocio, he entertained the King with announcements of an impending battle, and the King was taken in by him just as he was by M. de Vendôme. But in the end he did not venture to

encounter the enemy, who, he said, had been reinforced ; and he retreated to Strasbourg, giving Prince Louis leisure to besiege Haguenau.

Peri, a very brave and capable Italian officer, commanded there ; he held out for a week, but the place was not tenable, and he beat the *chamade*. Thurgen, who commanded the besieging force, insisted on the garrison surrendering as prisoners of war, whereupon firing recommenced. But Peri had made an opening by which he could retreat, and the following night he withdrew the greater part of the garrison, leaving Colonel Arling to amuse the enemy with 500 men. Arling was a German, and had been page to Madame. He carried out Peri's orders successfully, and managed to rejoin him with his men. They arrived at Saverne with 1,500 men, the whole of the garrison. This stratagem was much admired ; Peri was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General, and Arling was made a Brigadier. It was now the middle of October, and both armies went into winter-quarters soon afterwards.

In Italy a sharp cavalry skirmish took place on the 25th of June, in which the Prince d'Elbœuf was killed. It was a pity, for he was a young man of great promise, the only son of the Duke d'Elbœuf, and unmarried. A fortnight later, owing to the negligence of the Grand Prior, four battalions which formed part of his small army were surrounded and captured. The King was looking on at a game of mall at Marly when a note from Chamillart was brought to him announcing this news. He told the bystanders what had happened, adding that it was of no consequence, as M. de Vendôme would soon join the Grand Prior and put everything to rights. No one could understand the confidence he placed in M. de Vendôme. That General kept on reporting slight successes at the outposts which led to nothing, and merely served as pretexts for sending off couriers and entertaining the King with his exploits. The King was the only person who did not see how trifling they were. At last, on the 16th of August, a serious battle did take place, through Vendôme's obstinacy, and very nearly resulted in disaster.

His army was near Cassano, and Prince Eugène thought it a favourable opportunity to attack him. Vendôme was warned repeatedly that the enemy was advancing, but would not believe it ; he said Prince Eugène would not

dream of attacking him. But he did dream of it, to good purpose ; his attack was lively and well-sustained, and, as our troops had not sufficient time to take up their positions properly, it was at first quite successful. Vendôme was so convinced that the battle was lost that he retired to a village at some distance to consider how he might best withdraw the remains of his army. To complete the disaster, the Grand Prior, who had been ordered to hold a certain position and not leave it on any account, abandoned it without sending word to his brother, and ran away to a house about half a league away, taking some troops with him to act as his body-guard. Vendôme was having something to eat in the village to which he had retreated, and it must be confessed that he chose a strange opportunity for eating, when Chemerault, a very good General and one whom he trusted, discovered him and told him that the marine brigade under Le Guerchois had behaved with great steadiness and restored the fight. Vendôme could hardly believe him, but he got on his horse, went to the front, and finished the battle gloriously. He remained in possession of the field, and Prince Eugène retired to Treviglio.

Many officers of distinction were killed on both sides. We lost Praslin, who was mortally wounded while leading on the marine brigade. It is thus that noblemen of rank perish in subaltern employments, though they have genius enough to support the burdens of the highest positions either in peace or war, if the possession of birth and merit were not a certain reason for their being excluded from them ; especially when combined with a haughty spirit which spurns baseness and looks to nothing but truth and honour. I have spoken sufficiently of Praslin in these Memoirs ; it is unnecessary to say how profoundly I was grieved by his death. My consolation was that, during the three or four months that remained to him after his wound, his eyes were opened to what is most important of all, and his end was as truly Christian as his life had been brave and honourable. St. Nectaire brought the news of the battle of Cassano to the King.

Vendôme, as usual, made the most of his triumph. As usual, he expected his bare word to be believed, though surrounded by clear-sighted people who knew the truth, and shrugged their shoulders at his boasting ; he ventured to report that the enemy had lost more than 13,000 men,

against less than 3,000 on our side. The fact, very clearly proved, was that our loss was at least equal to theirs, and that the victory was completely barren. Nevertheless, it was talked of in the Court and town as a decisive advantage, due to the vigilance, capacity, and valour of Vendôme. Nobody mentioned his retreat to the village; that episode only came out when officers returned on leave. When he saw his brother after the battle he could not refrain from asking him why he had abandoned his post; although he did so mildly, the haughty younger brother lost his temper before everybody.

Vendôme, who had not been on good terms with him since he had prevented him and the Abbé de Chaulieu from plundering him any longer, was not sorry for the opportunity of getting rid of such an incompetent second in command. The Grand Prior had distinctly disobeyed orders, his cowardice was notorious; he dared not show himself anywhere. Not long afterwards he was ordered to quit the army and return to France. He demanded an interview with the King, to justify himself, with a haughtiness and audacity arising from his former experience of the King's leniency to a man of his birth.¹ This time, however, he was mistaken; the King refused him a hearing, and never saw him again. He went off to Rome; afterwards he returned to Châlons-sur-Saône, which was assigned as his place of exile, and spent his time as usual in low company and debauchery. He did not reappear till the time of the Regency.

Talking of this half-Mazarin family reminds me of Madame de Colonna, whom the King was so nearly marrying in his youth. She was the wildest, but nevertheless the best, of these nieces of the Cardinal. It is not easy to say which of them was most given to gallantry; but the mother of M. de Vendôme and the Grand Prior must be excepted, as she died when quite young and still innocent. Madame de Colonna took it into her head this year to leave Italy and land in Provence. She remained there some time before she could obtain leave to go farther. At last she was allowed to go and see her relations, on condition that she kept away from Paris, and, of course, from the Court. She went to stay with her brother, the Duke de Nevers, at Passy; but everything had changed since she had left France to be married, before the King's marriage; and there was no one

That is, illegitimate descent.

left whom she knew, except her own relations. She soon became disgusted at her cold reception, and went back to Italy of her own accord.

About this time the imprudence of one of my friends led him into an unpleasant scrape which grieved me, though it would be hardly worth recording but for the consequences which ensued from it later on. The Abbé de Mailly was a great friend of ours, his family and mine were connected, and had always been intimate with each other. He was brother-in-law to the Madame de Mailly who was Lady-in-Waiting to the Duchess of Burgundy. He was not a man of much ability, though not entirely devoid of it; but he was very ambitious. His mother had forced him to become a priest, much against his will; he was not very well suited to his profession, but he was an honourable man and made a virtue of necessity. After a time he was given a wretched little Abbey, and appointed one of the King's Almoners. In this humble position he vegetated for a long time, envying, as he has often confessed to me, the soldiers whom he saw mounting guard. Even then his ambition was to become a Cardinal, and he paid his court at St. Germain, hoping to obtain the nomination of the King of England. I used to laugh at him for his extravagant notions, but he invariably replied that, by concentrating all his energies on a single point, a man often succeeded in the long run. At last he was made Archbishop of Arles, in which I was of some assistance to him. It was a great step to be made Archbishop without ever having been a Bishop; I only remember one other instance of it; but what pleased my friend most was not so much becoming an Archbishop, as becoming Archbishop of Arles. Bordeaux, which was vacant at the same time, and given to Besons, Bishop of Aire, would not have pleased him nearly so much.

It was the position of Arles, so near to both Italy and Avignon, that charmed him. His first care on arriving there was to show all kinds of attention and civility to the Vice-Legate at Avignon. That post was then occupied by Gualterio, who was very anxious to be sent here as Nuncio; he knew our Court better than a great many of those who lived in it, and was quite aware of the relationship between Madame de Maintenon and the sister-in-law of his new neighbour; he therefore responded cordially to his advances, and they soon became real friends.

After two or three years Gualterio became Nuncio. The Archbishop wrote to me strongly recommending him ; he had also spoken to Gualterio about me, and the Italian prelate, with his intimate knowledge of our Court, was glad to make friends with a man whom he knew to be in close alliance with the Duke de Beauvilliers, the Chancellor, Chamillart, and other leading personages. There were impediments to our intercourse at first, because at that time the Papal Nuncios still kept up the pretension of not giving the hand ¹ to Dukes or foreign Princes, though they gave it freely to Secretaries of State. Consequently, no Duke or foreign Prince ever visited them ; for some time Gualterio and I only saw each other in the public apartments at Versailles. We took a liking to each other, and after proposing, as a compromise (which I did not accept), that I should visit him by a private staircase, when he would receive me with closed doors, he made up his mind to visit me at my own house, both at Paris, where I very seldom was, and at Versailles, every time he came there. This acquaintance became a real friendship, which lasted till his death ; after he left Paris we corresponded with each other every week, usually in cipher.

The Archbishop of Arles profited by the easy communication between Provence and Italy ; he contrived to enter into correspondence with the Pope, and by degrees came to be looked upon as a prelate of distinction whose friendship was worth cultivating, and who might very reasonably aspire to the purple. At that time the cabals respecting the constitution " Unigenitus " had not corrupted our clergy, nor altered the wise and traditional policy of our Court. It was looked upon as a crime for a Bishop to correspond directly with Rome. When a Bishop had occasion to write respecting ecclesiastical benefices he did it through a banker ; on any other subject he had to obtain permission from the King through the Secretary for Foreign Affairs ; to write directly to the Pope or to any of his Ministers, without the knowledge of the King or Secretary of State, was an unpardonable crime, and such a thing was never done. The Archbishop had therefore kept his correspondence very secret. The Nuncio and I knew of it, and we often warned

¹ That is, the Nuncio would not allow them to take precedence of him in his own house. To " give the hand " meant to place a person on one's right hand, the post of honour.

him of his danger ; but his ambition to be Cardinal was too strong for him.

The Pope in one of his letters made some mention of St. Trophimus, the apostle and first Bishop of Arles. Thereupon the Archbishop wrote back in such a way as to make the Pope wish to have a relic of the Saint ; he wrote and asked for one, with his own hand. The Archbishop sent him a relic with a fine letter, and received a brief one of thanks. It was impossible to detach a relic from the most holy body which rests at Arles without its becoming known ; the King got wind of the correspondence, and Torcy, by his orders, sent the Archbishop a harsh reprimand, and also spoke sharply to the Nuncio, who ran to tell me about it. We had great difficulty in smoothing the matter over ; however, the Archbishop got off with a reprimand and a strict order to have no further correspondence with Rome, under pain of the King's serious displeasure. He made humble apologies, protesting that he had acted in ignorance ; he was unwilling, however, to abandon his hopes of the Cardinalate, and still kept up his correspondence. But he took greater precautions, and contrived to conceal it for the future. It was a long time, nevertheless, before the impression on the King's mind was effaced ; Madame de Mailly, though she did not take up the Archbishop's cause very warmly, contrived at last to put matters right by the intervention of Madame de Maintenon.

The Archduke, weary of the indecisive campaign on the Portuguese frontier, embarked in the Anglo-Dutch fleet, and went off to make an attempt on Barcelona. He landed with fifteen battalions and more than one thousand cavalry, who were reinforced by six thousand Spanish rebels from Vigo, and the trenches were opened on the 1st of September. The Viceroy of Catalonia expelled Rose, the Governor of Barcelona, and the Town-Major, who were suspected of being in league with the Archduke. The garrison was strong in numbers, but consisted of bad troops.

An unpleasant affair occurred in Flanders between Surville and La Barre. They had a dispute at table, and Surville, being excited with wine, used some very insulting expressions to La Barre. The rest of the company, seeing them rise from their seats, interfered ; but they managed to get near each other, and in the confusion La Barre thought he received some personal violence. When Surville was

sober he did all that he could with honour to give satisfaction to La Barre, and put an end to the affair ; but in vain. The Elector of Bavaria, on the advice of Marshal de Villeroy, sent Surville to Brussels and placed La Barre under arrest.

Surville was the younger brother of Hautefort ; they were both Lieutenant-Generals, but they were very unlike each other in reputation. Surville's morals were very corrupt, his courage was extremely doubtful, and there never was a more stupid man. We have seen how he married a daughter of Marshal d'Humières, Vassé's widow. In spite of so many disqualifications he had obtained, I do not know how, the command of the King's own infantry regiment ; and this post brought him into immediate and constant relations with the King, who made a sort of plaything of this regiment, went into all its details like an ordinary Colonel, and favoured it in every way. This gave Surville a very advantageous and lucrative position ; and he was asked to Marly every time the King went there.

La Barre was of gentle birth, but poor, and a soldier of fortune. He was Lieutenant in the *compagnie-colonelle* of the regiment of guards, and consequently had the brevet-rank of Captain in the Guards. He was disliked in his own corps, and not much welcomed outside it. His reputation for courage was no better than Surville's, but he showed later on that people did him injustice on that point. He was a clever, scheming fellow, much given to underground plots, on friendly terms with several of the King's pages and principal valets. He was looked upon as a spy, and the suspicion was strengthened by the fact that the King treated him with considerably more favour and distinction than his position entitled him to.

The King had a kindness for both men, and, seeing that the Marshals of France, whose tribunal was the natural one, would have some difficulty in settling the quarrel, he condescended to take the matter in hand himself, a thing he had never done before for people of their position. He sent Surville to prison, but released him soon afterwards with orders to apologise to the Elector of Bavaria, in whose army the quarrel had taken place, and in his presence to do the same to La Barre. In the meantime the pride of the Hautefort family was offended, and they used haughty expressions which spoilt everything. La Barre complained that he had been subjected to fresh insults ; Surville was

sent to prison at Arras till the end of the campaign; La Barre was allowed to remain with the army.

Pontchartrain carried out his designs with regard to the Navy to the letter. The Count de Toulouse and Marshal de Cœuvres went to Toulon, expecting to find a fleet ready for them. There was first a delay, then a difficulty, then something was wanted; in short, they had to remain in harbour while the enemy's fleet was in control of the sea. The Admiral made a round of inspection of the southern ports, and then returned to Fontainebleau, followed not long afterwards by Marshal de Cœuvres, as dissatisfied as himself. Pontchartrain had contrived to prejudice the King against sending out such a large fleet as would be required, on the ground of expense; unfortunately, the King did not foresee that the want of a fleet would cause the loss of Barcelona, nor the very serious consequences which resulted from it, as will be related in the proper place. It was on the occasion of this return of the Count de Toulouse that he bought the estate of Rambouillet, about six leagues from Versailles.

Two persons, very unlike each other, died at this time: the widow of the First-President Lamoignon, and Ninon. Madame de Lamoignon—for these successful lawyers, when they rise to important judicial positions, adopt the “de”—Madame de Lamoignon, I say, was a Potier, niece of that Bishop of Beauvais who seemed likely to become Prime Minister at the death of Louis XIII, but was overthrown by Cardinal Mazarin. She was the mother of Basville, Intendant of Languedoc, and of Madame de Broglio, whose husband and second son have lately become Marshals of France. Her husband succeeded Bellièvre as First-President in 1658. I will relate one anecdote concerning him because it is historical and curious.

There was a great hunting-party at St. Germain. In those days the stag was hunted by hounds, not by men; there was not that immense crowd of beaters, the relays of horses, nor the roads all about the country which we see nowadays. The hounds ran towards Dourdan, and the chase was so prolonged that the King gave it up, and got home very late. The Count de Guiche, the Count du Lude, Vardes, and Lausun, who told me the story, with one or two others, lost their way, and were wandering about in the dark on their jaded horses when they saw a light. They made for it, and at last arrived at the gate of a sort of *château*;

they knocked, gave their names, and asked for hospitality. It was then between ten and eleven at night, the season being the end of autumn. The proprietor came to them, sent their horses to the stable, took them to the fire, and had their boots pulled off ; and in the meantime caused supper to be got ready, of which they were much in need. The repast was excellent, as was the wine, of several different kinds.

The master of the house was polite and attentive, neither too ceremonious nor too officious, with all the appearance and manners of a man accustomed to the best society. They found out that his name was Fargues, and that of his house, Courson ; that he had lived there in retirement for some years, having neither wife nor children, but entertaining his friends occasionally. The servants seemed well-trained, and the house was comfortable. After supper Fargues showed them to their rooms, where they found excellent beds. They were very tired, and slept long. As soon as they were dressed next morning they found a very good breakfast ready for them ; after which their horses were brought round, as thoroughly rested as themselves.

Charmed with Fargues' polite manners, and grateful for his hospitality, they offered their services to him in any way possible to them, and set out for St. Germain. On arriving there they found everybody talking about them, and wondering where they had spent the night. They were at that time the smartest of the smart young men at Court, and admitted to familiar intercourse with the King. They related their adventure to him, and were loud in their praises of their host and his household. The King asked his name ; as soon as he heard it he said : " What ! Fargues ! is he so close at hand ? " They began singing his praises again ; but the King said not another word. When he passed on into the apartments of the Queen-mother he told her the story ; they both thought it very impudent of Fargues to live so near the Court, and strange that he should have been there so long without their hearing of it except by this chance hunting adventure.

Fargues had taken a leading part in all the movements of the town of Paris against the Court and Cardinal Mazarin. If he had not been hanged, it was not for want of ill-will towards him ; he had been picked out as a special mark for vengeance ; but he had been protected by his party, and formally comprised within the amnesty. The hatred which

he had incurred, and to which he had so nearly fallen a victim, made him resolve to leave Paris for ever, and live quietly in retirement ; and up to that time he had remained in concealment. Cardinal Mazarin was dead, and there was no question of calling any one to account for old affairs ; but, as he had been a marked man, he was afraid lest the Government should pick some new quarrel with him. For that reason he had been living a retired life, on good terms with his neighbours, and, relying on the amnesty, never gave a thought to the past trouble.

The King and the Queen, his mother, who had only pardoned him because they could not help it, sent for the First-President Lamoignon, and ordered him to make secret inquiries into Fargues' conduct and past life, to see whether some means could not be found to punish him for his former insolence, and make him repent of having set the Court at defiance by living so quietly and comfortably in its neighbourhood.

Lamoignon, a good courtier and a greedy man, resolved to satisfy them, and make some profit for himself out of the affair. He made inquiries to such good purpose that he found a way of implicating Fargues in a murder which had been committed in Paris at the height of the troubles ; whereupon he quietly issued a warrant, and had Fargues arrested and taken to the Conciergerie. Fargues, knowing that he had committed no offence since the publication of the amnesty, was very much astonished ; still more so when he heard the charge against him. He made a very good defence, and pleaded, in addition, that the murder having taken place at the time when the revolt in Paris was at its height, it was covered, like all other offences committed in those troubled times, by the amnesty ; according to the universal custom in such cases.

The distinguished courtiers who had received such kindness from this unfortunate man did all they could to obtain mercy for him from his judges, and from the King ; but in vain. Fargues was promptly beheaded, and his confiscated property was given as a reward to the First-President.¹

¹ This story has been cast up against Saint-Simon by writers who dispute his credibility as an historian, and it must be confessed that there is hardly a word of truth in it from beginning to end ; it relates, however, to events which occurred long before Saint-Simon was born. Fargues' offence was not that of killing a man at Paris during the disturbances of the Fronde ; it was far more serious. He was Town-Major

It suited him very well, for Courson is hardly more than a league from Basville. One of Lamoignon's daughters married Harlay, who succeeded him as First-President, so both he and his son-in-law enriched themselves in the same office, the one through the blood of an innocent man, the other by betraying the trust confided to him by his friend, as I have already related. Madame de Lamoignon had led a religious life for a long time, and made a very pious ending. She left a fortune of more than 1,500,000 livres.

of Hesdin, a small fortified town near the Flemish frontier, and his wife was niece to M. de Bellebrune, the Governor. In January 1658 M. de Bellebrune died, and Fargues seems to have hoped that he might succeed to his office. Being disappointed in this, he closed the gates of Hesdin against the new Governor; and, with the assistance of his brother-in-law, who had great influence in the town, expelled such of the inhabitants as he could not trust. These two worthies then proceeded to levy contributions on the surrounding district, and finally handed Hesdin over to the Spaniards, with whom the French were at war. Even the story of the circumstances which led to Fargues' arrest is doubtful. The four gentlemen who are said to have received his hospitality were, no doubt, very young; still, it seems strange that not one of them should have recognised a name which had been so notorious less than six years previously; there are also other circumstances which make it more likely that Fargues had incautiously crossed the frontier, and been arrested there, than that he should have been living for years within a few miles of Paris. M. de Lausun was not a very trustworthy person, and when he told the story to Saint-Simon more than thirty years had elapsed since Fargues' arrest. Probably it was founded on a confused recollection of something which did really occur in connection with another case. The untruth of this story need not, however, make us distrust Saint-Simon's accuracy when speaking of the events of his own time. Due allowance must be made for his prejudices, for he was a warm friend, and, more especially, a "good hater"; yet, on the whole, his *Memoirs* bear the stamp of truth. When he mentions things which did not come under his own observation he always gives his authority; when he is merely repeating the gossip of the day he says so frankly. The worst of this story, so far as he is concerned, is not that it is untrue, but that he drags it into his *Memoirs* merely to discredit the Lamoignon family, whom he disliked. Now it does not appear that the First-President Lamoignon had anything to do with Fargues' case. Fargues was tried at Abbeville before Machault, Intendant of Picardy, and hanged (not beheaded) in that town on the 27th of March, 1665. The crimes for which he suffered were robbery, embezzlement, and peculation of military stores while Town-Major of Hesdin; it is probable that it was fear lest a new Governor should discover his malpractices which led to his subsequent proceedings. Unfortunately for himself, he had given personal offence to the King, otherwise his other crimes might have been overlooked. Louis XIV was present with the army in April 1658, when Turenne, on his march to besiege Dunkirk, made a demonstration against Hesdin, hoping to overawe the place into surrender. Fargues, however, knowing that M. de Turenne could not afford to waste time in a siege, not only prepared for resistance, but actually fired on the King and his escort. He must have known that Louis XIV was not in the least likely to forgive such an affront; and this makes it still more improbable that he should have taken up his abode so near the Court.

Ninon, a famous courtesan, who was known as Made-moiselle de l'Enclos after old age had forced her to give up her profession, was an instance of triumphant vice conjoined with wit and with some compensating virtues. The scandal she gave and the disorder which she caused among the most distinguished and brilliant youth of the time overcame the indulgence which the Queen-mother (not without some reason) always showed to persons of gallantry, and she sent her an order to retire into a religious house. Ninon read the *lettre-de-cachet*, and, observing that no particular house was specified, she said to the officer who brought it : " Since the Queen is so good as to leave the choice of a house to me, will you kindly tell her that I select the monastery of the Franciscan monks at Paris ! " and gave him back the note with a ceremonious curtsy. The officer, stupefied at her effrontery, had not a word to say ; and the Queen thought her answer so funny that she left her alone.

Ninon never had more than one lover at a time, but crowds of adorers ; and when she was tired of the lover in possession she told him so candidly, and took another. It was useless for the deserted one to sigh and complain ; the edict had gone forth ; and this creature had usurped such authority that he could not venture to quarrel with his supplanter ; he might think himself fortunate if he was admitted to her company on the footing of a friend of the house. Sometimes, when she was very much pleased with her lover, she would remain faithful to him all the time he was away on a campaign. When La Châtre was setting off for the army on one occasion he asked Ninon to let him be one of these lucky few. It seems that she did not give him a very definite promise, and he was silly enough (for he was very silly, and presumptuous in proportion) to ask for it in writing. She gave it him ; he carried it off and boasted about it a good deal. But the note of hand was dishonoured ; and every time she broke her promise she exclaimed : " Oh, what a valuable note La Châtre has got ! " Her favoured lover at last inquired what she meant, and she explained. He told the story, and La Châtre was well laughed at ; the joke even reached the army where he was serving.

Ninon had many illustrious friends, and she was clever enough to keep them all, and to keep them on good terms with each other ; at least, there were no open quarrels. In her own house she insisted on a respect and outward pre-

priety which princesses find it hard to keep up when they have weaknesses. In this way she had friends in the highest and most select circles ; it became the fashion to be admitted to her house, and admission to it was useful because of the acquaintances to be made there. She never allowed gaming, nor loud laughter, nor disputes, nor arguments about religion or politics. There was much wit in her circle ; the news of the day was to be heard there ; among other things, news of intrigues of gallantry, but in such a way as not to give rise to calumny. The conversation was always light, delicate, and cautious, and she kept it going by her wit and knowledge of the world.

Strange to say, she acquired a respect and consideration which attracted people to her house long after her charms had passed away. She knew all the intrigues of the Court, both old and new, the serious as well as the light ones ; her conversation was delightful ; she was disinterested, faithful, and could be trusted thoroughly with secrets ; with the exception of her one weakness, she might be said to be virtuous and honourable. She often helped her friends with money as well as by her influence, took part in very important affairs on their behalf, and faithfully kept some deposits of money and dangerous secrets which had been entrusted to her. All this gained for her a great reputation and a very singular degree of consideration.

She had been an intimate friend of Madame de Maintenon while the latter was living at Paris. Madame de Maintenon did not like people to talk to her about Ninon, but she dared not disavow her, and used to write friendly letters to her occasionally up to the time of her death. L'Enclos, for Ninon took that name when she had given up the trade of her youth (which, however, she carried on rather late in life), was not so reserved with her intimate friends, and when she took a strong interest in any one she would write to Madame de Maintenon, who helped her promptly and efficaciously. But after Madame de Maintenon had become great they only saw each other two or three times, and then very privately.

L'Enclos often made admirable repartees ; I must quote two, both addressed to the last Marshal de Choiseul. Choiseul, who was one of her old friends, had formerly been gallant and good-looking. He was on bad terms with M. de Louvois, and he was deploring his bad luck, when the King,

in spite of the Minister's opposition, made him a Knight of the Order in the promotion of 1688. He was not expecting it in the least, although of the highest birth and one of the oldest and best Generals ; he was, consequently, beside himself with joy, and used to look complacently in the glass at his blue ribbon. L'Enclos noticed him doing it two or three times ; at last she said impatiently : " Count, if I catch you at it again I will remind you of the names of your colleagues ! " There were some of them, indeed, of a sort to make a man weep to be associated with them ; but what were they in comparison with some of the Knights of 1724, and later promotions ! The worthy Marshal possessed every virtue, but he was anything but lively or witty. At last she yawned, looked at him, and said before all the other visitors : " O Lord ! how many virtues you make me hate ! " which is a line out of some play or other. As may be supposed, this sally was greeted with general laughter ; however, it did not cause a quarrel between them.

L'Enclos was considerably over eighty years of age when she died, still visited and respected. She kept her health to the end. She gave up her last years to God. She was such a singular and unique character that I could not refrain from speaking of her at some length.

A short time after the Court arrived at Fontainebleau a terrible adventure happened to Courtenvaux. He was the eldest son of M. de Louvois, who obtained for him the reversion of his own office, but afterwards, seeing that he was incapable of exercising it, caused it to be given instead to Barbésieux, his third son. As a consolation, Courtenvaux was given the command of the Hundred-Swiss, which, except the grand offices, is undoubtedly the first and best post in the King's household. He was a very small man, with a ridiculous voice ; he had served little and not very creditably, was given to obscure debauchery, and was treated with contempt in his own family as well as in the Court, where he had few acquaintances. He was miserly, and fond of making mischief ; and, though modest and respectful in his manners, he was very passionate, and could not control himself in his fits of anger. Altogether he was a very silly man, and was treated as such even by his sister, the Duchess de Villeroy, and his sister-in-law, the Maréchale de Cœuvres ; one never met him at their houses.

The King's curiosity to know everything that went on was

beyond all belief, though he was generally supposed to be very inquisitive. He had authorised Bontems, and later on Bloin, Governor of Versailles, to engage a number of Swiss in addition to those usually employed about the state-apartments and gardens of Versailles, Marly, and Trianon. These Swiss wore the King's livery, and were responsible only to the governors; they had secret orders to patrol, in the evening and during the night, the staircases and passages, and, in fine weather, the courtyards and gardens; to conceal themselves and watch people; to listen to their conversation when they could; to note how long they remained in any room into which they entered; and to report anything they discovered. This system of espionage, in which some other servants and valets also took part, was in full force at Versailles, Marly, Trianon, Fontainebleau, and every place where the King was.

Courtenvaux often had quarrels with these Swiss; he did not like them because they did not recognise his authority and carried off posts and rewards which he thought belonged by right to his own Hundred-Swiss. Between the guard-rooms of the Hundred-Swiss and the King's Guards at Fontainebleau, and near the entrance to Madame de Maintenon's apartments, is a large square room through which people must pass to enter the *château*, unless they go round by the courtyards; so that it is a very convenient place for observing those who go out and in. Till this year it had been the custom for some men of the Hundred-Swiss and some of the Guards to sleep in this room; and when the King entered or left Madame de Maintenon's rooms, they all stood to their arms mingled together; so that this room was looked upon as an extension of the two guardrooms. This year the King arranged that some of Bloin's Swiss should sleep there instead of the Guards and Hundred-Swiss.

Courtenvaux, without saying a word to the Captain of the Guard on duty, who was equally interested in the matter, chose to consider this alteration as another encroachment of Bloin's Swiss on his own; he went into a furious passion, abused them roundly, and used all kinds of threats. They let him yelp away without replying; they had their orders, and were wise enough to hold their tongues. The King heard nothing of this till the evening, when he came out from supper and went as usual to the large oval room accompanied by his family and the ladies of the Princesses'

households ; for, as there were no private rooms for them at Fontainebleau, these ladies had to assemble round the King in this one. The King sent at once for Courtenvaux. As soon as he made his appearance, without giving him time to approach, the King began speaking to him from the other end of the room, in a fit of anger so terrible and so very unusual with him, that not only Courtenvaux, but the Princes, Princesses, ladies, and all who were present, trembled. The harshest expressions, most extraordinary in the King's mouth, were showered on Courtenvaux, who, fainting with terror and ready to sink into the ground, had neither time nor power to utter a single word. The King wound up his reprimand by saying roughly : " Get out of the room ! "

Courtenvaux hardly had strength enough to drag himself to his quarters. Little as his relations cared for him, they were alarmed ; each of them had recourse to some protector. The Duchess of Burgundy, who was very fond of the Duchess de Villeroy and the Maréchale de Cœuvres, did what she could with Madame de Maintenon, and even spoke to the King. At last the King's anger was appeased, but he warned Courtenvaux that, at the very next piece of folly he committed, he would be deprived of his functions. The cause of this strange scene was that Courtenvaux had let the whole Court into the King's secret by making such a fuss about the alteration, for its object was clear enough as soon as attention was drawn to it. The King, who always took the greatest precautions to conceal his espionage, had hoped that the change would pass unnoticed ; and he was beside himself with anger when Courtenvaux by his clamour caused it to become a matter of public remark.

About this time there died a man even more despised than Courtenvaux : I mean the Count de Tonnerre. He was of high birth and great ability, but those were the only good qualities he possessed. He was such a coward that he would submit to anything ; yet his rascality and his sarcasms were always getting him into quarrels. At last he was looked upon as beneath contempt, and people were ashamed to insult him when he made some insolent remark. He had been First Gentleman of the Chamber to Monsieur ; he was nephew to the Bishop of Noyon, of whom I have spoken more than once, and brother to the Bishop of Langres, whom I shall have occasion to mention in the future.

CHAPTER XVII

1705

Meditated siege of Turin—La Feuillade appointed to the command—Vauban's generous offer declined—Barcelona besieged by the Archduke—Fresh levies of troops—Despair of the people—The King's credulity—Roquelaure—Madame du Maine—The Bishop of Metz in a scrape—His character cleared—My lawsuit with the Duke de Brissac—Legal quibbles—The case decided in my favour by the Parliament of Rouen—Bonfires and rejoicings—The Abbé de Polignac—His opinion of Marly rain—He follows in the steps of Nangis—Scrapes acquaintance with the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers—They introduce him to the Duke of Burgundy—My prediction to the Duke de Beauvilliers.

It had been announced in the spring, very injudiciously, that the siege of Turin was about to be undertaken. Perhaps the resolution itself was equally injudicious; but it was decided to go on with it, though the victory of Cassano had turned out to be quite barren. The King had changed his opinion of La Feuillade since the time when Chamillart proposed his marriage with his daughter; or rather, he was anxious to please his Minister in the way most gratifying to his feelings; he therefore suggested to him that his son-in-law should have the chief command at this important siege. Chamillart was quite taken by surprise, and made some feeble remonstrances. The King made a kind reply, spoke well of La Feuillade, and said he liked to give young men of talent and zeal an opportunity of distinguishing themselves. La Feuillade was therefore ordered, as soon as the siege of Chivas was over, to draw near to Turin and prepare for the siege. He arrived before the place on the 6th of September, and, as may be supposed, ample means were placed at his disposal.

Vauban made a magnanimous offer; he begged the King to send him to Turin to give advice; he said he would leave his Marshal's bâton at home; it was not right that he should become useless on account of the honour the King had conferred on him, and if it became an impediment to

the King's service he would gladly give it up. This Roman offer was not accepted. La Feuillade would have been thrown too much in the shade by Vauban. La Feuillade wished, contrary to Vauban's advice, to attack the place on the side of the citadel, and not to invest it on the other side of the Po. M. de Vendôme sent word by a courier that he was of the same opinion; he added that there was nothing to fear from Prince Eugène, and urged the importance of taking Turin. But some difficulties supervened, and the siege was put off for a time.

The siege of Barcelona, conducted by the Archduke in person, was better concerted. On the 16th of September the enemy carried the Monjuich by storm; they lost heavily, and the garrison broke through and escaped into Barcelona, yet it was a serious disaster. It was immediately followed by another: the insurgent Catalans seized Lerida and Tortosa. On the other hand, on the Portuguese frontier, Tessé forced the enemy to raise the siege of Badajoz. Ruvigny, who commanded the English forces there with the title of Lord Galway, lost his arm, retired to England, and never served again.¹ Barcelona surrendered on the 4th of October.

The war at sea was more fortunate, as many rich prizes were taken; but we lost Saint-Paul, who was killed in an action in which he captured eleven merchant-ships coming from the Baltic and their escort of three English ships of war. Saint-Paul left only three very young nephews; the King gave them each a pension.

La Feuillade, or his secretary, made a costly blunder. He wrote to the Governor of Acqui to come and join him with his garrison, but addressed the letter by mistake to Asti. The Governor of Asti obeyed the order, and the Duke of Savoy instantly seized this important post, which La Feuillade tried in vain to recapture.

The constant drain of men to Germany and Italy, caused more by sickness in the hospitals than by losses in action, made the Government resolve to increase the army by an addition of five men to each company, and 25,000 militia were raised, to the despair of the provinces. The King was entertained with tales of the eagerness of the people to enlist, parties of four or five carefully selected men

¹ This is a mistake. Galway did return to Spain, to lose the disastrous battle of Almanza in 1707.

were shown him at Marly, on his way to Mass, and stories were told him of their zeal and enthusiasm. I heard these stories myself several times, and I heard the King repeat them complacently ; whereas I knew, by reports from my own estates and other quarters, that the people were driven to despair. Many of them actually mutilated themselves to avoid serving. They wept, and cried out that they were taken away to perish ; and it is true that most of them were sent to Italy, whence not a man had ever returned. Every one at Court knew these things. People could only cast down their eyes when they listened to the lies told to the King, and saw his credulity ; but in private they expressed themselves freely, regarding this pernicious flattery. Many new regiments were also raised, which made it necessary to pay a great number of Colonels and staff-officers ; it would have been better to add new companies and battalions to the old regiments, from which they would soon have acquired the *esprit-de-corps*.

I saw a good deal of Caillières ; he had taken a fancy to me, and I found his conversation instructive. The disasters of Blenheim, Gibraltar, and Barcelona ; the revolt of Catalonia and the neighbouring districts ; our barren successes in Italy ; the exhaustion of Spain and France, in men as well as money ; the incapacity of our Generals, whose blunders were hushed up by court favour,—all these things made me reflect. I thought it would be wise for us, before worse things happened, to put an end to the war by giving up to the Archduke such territories as we should find it difficult to keep. I thought a partition might be effected by which Philip V would still be a great King, in possession of all Italy except the republics of Genoa and Venice, the Papal States, and Sicily ; while our King could obtain Lorraine by making arrangements elsewhere for the Dukes of Savoy, Lorraine, Parma, and Modena. I made out a plan in my head without committing it to writing, and told it to Caillières, more to obtain information from him than thinking my suggestion a good one ; but I was surprised to find that he highly approved of it. He asked me to put it in writing and show it to those Ministers with whom I was intimate. After some hesitation I did show it to the Duke de Beauvilliers, who thought my plan very reasonable, as did M. de Chevreuse ; and they wished me to submit it to the others. I must not let

false modesty prevent me from reporting their replies, which were characteristic of both. The Chancellor, after listening to me attentively, said my scheme was so good that he would be willing to kiss my — if that would ensure its being carried into effect; Chamillart replied gravely that the King would never surrender a single acre of the whole Spanish inheritance. From that time I realised the blindness of our Government, and how much reason we had to dread its consequences.

About this time I had to sympathise with M. and Madame de Beauvilliers, in a great affliction which befell them. They had two sons, aged respectively seventeen and sixteen, good-looking and promising boys. They both died of smallpox at Versailles, the younger on the 25th of November, the elder on the 2nd of December. The grief of their parents was extreme, they never got over it to the end of their days; but they bore it with courage, faith, and complete resignation to the will of God. After a time I used to change the conversation quietly when M. de Beauvilliers spoke to me of his sons; he noticed it, and said he knew I did it to spare his feelings, and he thanked me for it, but he had so few persons to whom he cared to mention the subject that he begged me to continue talking of it when he began, for it relieved him. He often spoke of his lost children when we were alone together, and I saw that it really was a relief to him. His son-in-law was not a person to give him much consolation, he kept his wife always at Paris, and all M. de Beauvilliers' other daughters were nuns. I shall have only too many occasions to mention the Duke de Mortemart.

The armies of Flanders and Germany having gone into winter-quarters, Marchin and Villars returned to Court. Marshal de Villeroy was the last to arrive; he timed himself so as to appear during matins on Christmas Eve. He was the more pleased with the King's kind reception because it was public, and his entrance had caused a great stir. He passed his time during the remainder of the service in making gallant speeches to the ladies, in receiving the congratulations of the most distinguished persons present, and in beating time to the music with great elegance, and with an accuracy of which he was very proud.

Roquelaure, on his return, had a brief audience of the King, to exculpate himself from the charge of negligence

in guarding his lines, and from responsibility for the defeat and confusion which ensued. The King had been much in love with Mademoiselle de Laval, at that time Maid of Honour to the Dauphiness, and he arranged her marriage with Roquelaure, then known as Biran. People will not easily forget the joke Roquelaure made on the birth of his eldest daughter: "Welcome, Mademoiselle," said he, "I did not expect you quite so soon!" The fact is, that she had not kept him waiting very long. Roquelaure was a professed wit, and, though rather too fond of low comedy, he sometimes said very amusing things, even, as we have seen, at his own expense. The King always treated Madame de Roquelaure with consideration, and could not long resist her grief at her husband's situation; we shall soon see in what way he was enabled to retire from the service for good. She did not bring a penny of dowry with her into a family which was loaded with debt, and yet, through her favour and cleverness, it became one of the richest and most substantial in the country. But fortunate beauty was always the best of dowries under Louis XIV; Madame de Soubise is another instance of it.

Towards the end of the year Tessé married his eldest son to the daughter of Bourcher, State Chancellor. This marriage was just the reverse of Madame de Roquelaure's; the bride had neither birth, beauty, nor cleverness, but plenty of money, and that was what Tessé wanted.

The Duke de Duras made a more suitable match: he married Mademoiselle de Bournonville, who had come into possession of great wealth by the death of her parents. She was in a convent at Paris; the Maréchale de Noailles used to ask her to stay with her for balls at Court, and she danced beautifully. She was the Goddess of Youth personified, full of grace and gaiety. The Maréchale treated her like her own daughter; she gave the wedding party, and had the newly married pair to live with her. What would Marshal de Duras have said to it! he who detested Marshal de Noailles and treated him with so little respect!

Madame du Maine had for some time given up regular attendance at Court, and everything which she looked upon as constraint; she cared neither for the King nor for M. le Prince, and the King quite understood M. du Maine's reasons for not contradicting her. If he ventured on the slightest remonstrance, he had to put up with

haughty reminders of the honour she had done him in marrying him ; and very often, without any reason whatever, she had outbursts of temper which made him fear lest she should go out of her mind.¹ So he resolved to let her do as she pleased, and ruin him in entertainments, balls, fireworks, and comedies, in which she acted herself in public, dressed like an actress. This went on almost every day at Clagny, a house close to Versailles, which had been superbly built for Madame de Montespan, and given to M. du Maine when she retired from the Court.

At the end of the year the Duke of Berry was delivered from his governors. Never was a young man so glad.

A cruel misadventure happened about the same time to the Bishop of Metz ; it was a most absurd affair, but caused a great scandal. A chorister boy, son of a soldier in the Light Horse of the Guard, ran crying out of the Bishop's rooms, where he was sitting alone, while his servants were at dinner, and complained to his mother that the Bishop had whipped him cruelly. Out of this indiscreet whipping, which, it is true, was not quite in keeping with the office of a Bishop, charitable people wanted to make something worse ; and the Cathedral Chapter took the matter up. The light-horseman rode off to Versailles as hard as he could, and threw himself at the King's feet with a petition asking for justice. The Maréchale de Rochefort sent everywhere to look for me, and begged me to see Chamillart, and ask him to help the Bishop in this affair which his enemies had got up against him, and which touched the honour of the whole family. I did so at once, and Chamillart, always obliging, was glad to be of service. He got the King's order to write to the Intendant of Metz telling him to hush the matter up in such a way that nothing more should be heard about it.

But Cardinal de Coislin, who was honour, piety, and purity personified, hastened up from Orleans as soon as he heard of it, and begged the King to let the affair be thoroughly inquired into. He said, if his nephew was guilty, he deserved to be deprived of his bishopric and his office ; but, on the other hand, if he was innocent it was only right that the persons who had spread such a calumny should make reparation in public and in a manner befitting

¹ There was a good deal of madness in the Condé family : M. le Prince her father, was quite crazy at times.

their wickedness. It was Christmas when the Cardinal arrived, and the inquiry lasted till the 18th of January, when the King ordered the light-horseman, with his whole family, to go and ask pardon of the Bishop in public; at the same time the registers of the Cathedral Chapter were to be searched, and anything reflecting on the conduct of the Bishop was to be entirely expunged from them; so that the affair, which had caused a frightful scandal at first, evaporated altogether.

The strange thing is, that the Bishop of Metz had become a priest with the connivance of his uncle, without his father's knowledge. His father wished him to marry, seeing that his only other son was not likely to have children; and it was supposed that the Abbé de Coislin, as the Bishop was then, feeling himself no more fit for marriage than his brother, had taken orders rather than expose himself to it. It is true that he had so little beard that he might be said to have none, and that nothing was ever said against his morals, though his life was by no means devout or constrained. The remainder of his life was sometimes eccentric, for he always was so; but it was entirely devoted to the affairs of his diocese till his death in 1733, and abounded in deeds of charity, some public, others concealed. It was proved thoroughly that this affair arose merely from an imprudent act on his part, or from a trap into which he fell; but he nearly died of grief at the time, and it was such a shock to the Cardinal that his health never completely recovered from it.

I have thought it better not to interrupt my narrative of the public events of this year by interpolating an account of a private affair of my own. It would hardly be worth mentioning here for its own sake, but it had some connection with more important matters later on.

It will be remembered that the Count de Cossé had considerable difficulty in making good his claim to the dignity of Duke de Brissac in succession to my brother-in-law; that on public grounds I had thought it right to support his claim, and that I had taken a very active part in the proceedings, being, in fact, his chief adviser throughout. I had a long-pending lawsuit with my brother-in-law: he claimed 300,000 livres from me; I disputed my liability, and made a counter-claim, as heir to my sister, for 200,000 livres, all that was left of her dowry of 600,000 livres. If

I established my claim it took precedence of those of all my brother-in-law's creditors, and M. de Cossé, as his successor, would be liable for all his debts. His claim to the dukedom of Brissac was decided in his favour, and he took his seat on the 6th of May, 1700. I was overwhelmed with thanks by him and his family, and he publicly acknowledged more than once that he owed his dignity entirely to me.

In order not to add to his embarrassments I had allowed my lawsuit to remain dormant while his claim was still undecided; but when that was settled I resumed it. It had already been twice decided in my favour by the Parliament of Rouen; it had been brought before that Court because my brother-in-law had made a second marriage with the sister of Vertamont, First-President in the Grand Council, who had many relations in the Parliament of Paris, and would have had too much influence with that company. There were no new points to be decided; but the Duchess d'Aumont, who had lent money to my brother-in-law during the last years of his life, seeing that she was in danger of losing it, claimed that the suit ought to be heard again before the Parliament of Paris, on the ground that her interest had arisen since the former decision. She had, however, no arguments to urge which had not been brought forward by my brother-in-law at the first hearing, and by himself and his creditors at the second.

It became necessary to choose an arbitrator. The Duchess d'Aumont, taking advantage of the feebleness of the Chancellor Boucherat during his last years, delayed the matter as long as she could. She got him to nominate twenty-two arbitrators in succession, all of whom she refused, and all of whom I accepted. At last the Chancellor nominated Méliant, son of that Méliant who was a relation and henchman of M. de Luxembourg, and who had intrigued so publicly on his behalf in the matter of his claim to precedence. I disliked having him as arbitrator for that reason; but he was the twenty-third who had been suggested, and I could not allow Madame d'Aumont to go on quibbling everlastingly. We heard that she made sure of success if the cause were heard by the Parliament of Paris; and Menguy, who would have been the Judge, was not ashamed to say so publicly. On the other hand, I hoped that the Parliament of Rouen would do me the same justice as on the two former

occasions. The matter stood thus when I began to press for the decision which Madame d'Aumont had hitherto contrived to put off.

Méliant was prejudiced against me. He hoped to find that I was in the wrong ; but when he came to examine into the affair his natural love of justice made him change his mind. He was so indignant at the chicanery to which I had been subjected, and at the further quibbles which Madame d'Aumont, thinking he was on her side, confessed that she was preparing, that he determined to announce his decision at once ; and, in order that it might not be delayed, he even concealed from his family the death of a sister to whom he was much attached.

Self-interest, and the meanness which accompanies it, had introduced the custom some years before for the parties to a suit to attend the final decision with as large a train of supporters as possible. Accordingly, when the Judges entered the Court both Madame d'Aumont and I appeared, accompanied by a number of our relations. I had been surprised all along to find the new Duke de Brissac actively opposed to me, in spite of all I had done for him, and of all his protestations of friendship. I saw him standing at the door to catch the Judges as they came in ; he was chattering to them with some ostentation, to prevent Madame de Saint-Simon from saying a word to them. Gentle and retiring as she was, this behaviour did not please her ; she could not refrain from telling him that she was surprised to see him so actively opposed to us. He replied with some politeness that he thought there was nothing surprising about it, for the decision, one way or the other, meant a difference to him of 500,000 livres. " But," said Madame de Saint-Simon, calmly but haughtily, " I think it made a greater difference to you whether you remained M. de Cossé or became Duke de Brissac ! " He turned on his heel and vanished. He went off to Livry's house, where there were always a good many people, and high play going on all day. There he began talking about his lawsuit, which was the topic of the day. Lacour, who had been Captain in the Guards under Marshal de Lorge, looked up from the card-table, and asked Brissac if he had never heard that it was I who had made him a Duke and Peer. He was forced to admit that it was so, and every one present began to attack him. The end of it was that he and Madame d'Aumont

lost their appeal with costs and damages, and the suit was referred back to Rouen for final decision.

Everything had been ready for it years ago, but we had never been able to obtain one. M. d'Aumont used to spend seven or eight months of every year at Boulogne, and every year he stopped us by *lettres d'état*.¹ After his death, Madame d'Aumont, who had contrived in some way to make her stepson an interested party, wanted to go on using the *lettres d'état* in the same way. He was a friend of mine, and had never had any reason to like or respect his stepmother; he gave me his promise that she should not have his *lettres d'état*, and on the strength of that promise we made arrangements to have the suit decided this year at Rouen. I had already been there once when it was to come on; Le Guerchois went with me. His father had been *procureur-général* there, much respected, and some of his nearest relations held high positions in the magistracy. M. de Bouillon, and the Bouillon family generally, were not unmindful of what I had done for them in their lawsuit about the coadjutorship of Cluny; they were glad of the opportunity to do me a service in their turn, and they had a good deal of influence at Rouen.

It seemed as if the affair would be settled without any difficulty, and we did not think it necessary to go to Rouen; we went to La Ferté with M. and Madame de Lausun and a pleasant party for a fortnight. We had not been there a week when a message came from Rouen to say that M. de Brissac and M. d'Humières were there, and that all our friends thought we ought to go too. We started at once, and put up at the fine house belonging to Hocqueville, First-President of the *cour-des-aides*. Guerchois' mother was his sister; and I had had opportunities of rendering services to several of the principal members of this Parliament; so that the leading people of the town vied with each other in entertaining us. We had to stipulate that we should be allowed to dine at home, because we wished to give dinners ourselves to as many people as possible; but we were engaged to go out every evening for more than a week in advance. The suppers we went to might be better described as feasts. I never saw politer or more amiable people, nor better company; the worst of it was that we

¹ Letters granted to officers employed in the public service, suspending all legal proceedings against them on the part of their creditors or others.

got no sleep, for we had to be up early to see after our business. M. de Brissac and M. d'Humières were staying at an inn, and did not receive much hospitality. They had arrived in post-chaises, and without servants; our pomp and show gave more satisfaction.

When we had been there eight or ten days I received a letter from Pontchartrain to say that the King was much surprised to hear that I was at Rouen, and had ordered him to inquire why I was there and how long I intended to stay—so close was the attention which he paid to the doings of persons of any note whom he was accustomed to see about his person, even if they were not on terms of familiarity with him! I had no difficulty in explaining my absence.

I had been an intimate friend of the Duke d'Humières from childhood, and this lawsuit made no difference in our relations with each other. We sought each other out as soon as we arrived at Rouen; he came to dine with me, and, as I let it be known that we were friends, people asked him to supper to meet us. As for Brissac, I took care to publish his ingratitude, and declared that I would neither see him nor meet him in society. M. d'Humières and he were almost by themselves at the court of justice, which was the only place where I ever saw him; while we were attended by a crowd of people and all the principal ladies of the place, including, to our surprise, the wives of some of our Judges. The Parliament had the consideration to postpone all other business in the grand-chamber till ours was disposed of. Everything was ready for the final hearing, when it was put off by an obstacle which I could not have foreseen. I had spent part of the afternoon out walking with M. d'Humières, who seemed embarrassed, as if he had something on his mind. There were other people with us which prevented me from asking what was the matter, though he has since told me that he was several times on the point of speaking.

I was getting ready to go with Madame de Saint-Simon to supper with the President de Motteville, when we were informed that *lettres d'état* would be put in by our opponents next day. That was Monday evening: the session of the Parliament of Rouen would end on the following Saturday, and, if our case was not disposed of by then, the whole thing would have to be gone into again from the beginning, before a different set of Judges. The King was at Marly, and there

was no precedent for his paying attention while there to any affairs affecting private persons; and, moreover, *lettres d'état* put in by persons of distinction like our opponents were never declared invalid without a good deal of previous correspondence and delay. However, M. d'Hocqueville and Madame de Saint-Simon advised me to go to Marly instead of writing, as I had thought of doing, and also to keep my journey a secret. I took their advice, and arrived at Marly on Tuesday, at eight in the morning.

The Chancellor and Chamillart were sorry for me, but thought my case hopeless. La Vrillière, however, through whose hands my affairs must pass, as Boulogne was in his department, offered to do his best even at the risk of the King's displeasure. He helped me to draw up a statement of my case, and determined to ask the King to allow it to be investigated at the beginning of the sitting of the Council of State next morning. I then went to the Duke de Beauvilliers, who sent for Torcy, and gave him all the necessary information. I slept at Versailles, and next day about noon La Vrillière arrived with the good news that the *lettres d'état* had been declared invalid by a unanimous decision. He signed the judgement, and I took it to the Chancellor, who was stopping at Versailles for dinner on his way to Pontchartrain; it was a marvellous piece of good fortune that he had slept at Marly on the previous night. He put the Seal to the judgement, and I started immediately for Rouen, where I arrived on Thursday at two o'clock in the morning, three hours after a courier whom I had despatched with this unexpected good news.

M. de Brissac had left Rouen. He was so overjoyed at having put off the decision of our case indefinitely that he could not refrain from taking all the postmasters into his confidence wherever he changed horses on the road; and they, in their surprise at my speedy return, told me about it. Besides the decision respecting the *lettres d'état* I had an order from the Chancellor to the Parliament giving directions that nothing should prevent judgement being given at once. The Judges met on Saturday, the 11th of August, very early. At four o'clock in the morning a great number of gentlemen and ladies had assembled at our house to accompany us to the court. Judgement was given in our favour without a dissentient voice, with costs and damages; and it was received with applause which made the court-house

ring, and followed us along the streets. We could hardly get near our house, there was such a crowd. The kitchen caught fire, and nearly turned our joy into sorrow, for it was extinguished with great difficulty; our host was the only person who kept his presence of mind. However, we had our dinner, with a great party; and after we had spent three or four days in returning thanks to our supporters, my mother returned to La Ferté, and Madame de Saint-Simon and I went off to the seaside at Dieppe.

We afterwards went to Cuni, a fine house with a good property belonging to our host, M. d'Hocqueville, who had given us a very warm invitation. He was one of those simple, modest, upright magistrates of the old school, capable of friendship and of rendering services, but seeking justice above all things. He was very rich, and had no children. His wife, who never left Cuni, was a sister of the late Abbé de Boulez, formerly Almoner to the King. She was tall and well-made, and had been much in society. As she was clever and of an amiable and cheerful disposition, she had not lost the easy and graceful manners of the great world, although for many years she had led a life of the most austere piety, and was always occupied in good works. She and her husband gave a great deal to the poor, and lived in perfect union. They were honoured by all the country round. We left them with much regret to return to La Ferté for three weeks' rest; and then went back to the Court.

Madame d'Aumont was furious at losing her case; she could not understand it. She had forced her stepson's steward to give up the *lettres d'état* to her. He was at Boulogne at the time, and as soon as he heard of it he disavowed the *lettres d'état*, and wrote to tell me so; but the affair was already at an end. Madame de Brissac, happening to pass by our house at Paris, saw a bonfire which our servants had taken it into their heads to light; she inquired what it was for, and in this way heard of the result of the lawsuit. Her husband was so ashamed of his conduct that he avoided meeting me for a long time.

Through the kindness of Chamillart I was enabled to make the fortune of several persons who had helped me in this affair. He sent Méliant as Intendant to Pau, and afterwards to the army in Spain, where through the influence of Madame des Ursins and the Duke of Orleans I

contrived that his stay should be very pleasant. During the Regency I obtained for him a place as Conseiller d'Etat and another for Guerchois. I had previously obtained for the latter the Intendancy of Alençon. His brother was a Captain in the Guards, and was very anxious to get out of a position which gave no hope of promotion; for the King had made it a rule not to allow officers of that corps to be transferred to other regiments. Chamillart was good enough to speak to the King in his favour, and was twice rebuffed. Seeing me much disappointed, without saying another word to me, he made a third attempt, and obtained the Old Marine regiment for Le Guerchois. He distinguished himself very much at the head of this corps, became a *maréchal-de-camp* and a Lieutenant-General, and was mortally wounded at the victory of Parma, to which he contributed materially by his boldness in taking the responsibility of altering the arrangement of the troops before daybreak.

La Vrillière, who had Guyenne in his department, had already procured some favours for me respecting my government of Blaye. This last service crowned the others, and was the cause of his having an opportunity of playing a part during the Regency; the only one, amid the general shipwreck of the Secretaries of State, who had a chance of doing so. I shall relate the circumstances at the proper time.

Before winding up the affairs of this year I must relate the beginning of a story the sequel to which will be found later on. The Abbé de Polignac, after his Polish adventures and the banishment which followed them, had at last got his head above water again. He was a tall, handsome man, with a fine countenance and agreeable manners. He was very clever, with much information on every kind of subject; his voice was charming, and he possessed a manly, persuasive eloquence, explaining himself clearly and accurately, with happy expressions peculiar to himself; everything he said seemed natural and convincing. No one had a better acquaintance with literature; he had a delightful way of explaining the most difficult subjects so as to bring them within the comprehension of any one; and he was a most amusing storyteller. He had a superficial knowledge of every art, every trade, every manufacture; the business he understood least was his own, for he had little of the learning suitable to the ecclesiastical

profession. He was always trying to captivate, either through the eyes, the heart, or the understanding, and he was as anxious to please a footman or a maidservant as their master or mistress. Whilst talking to him, every one felt himself witty and learned; his conversation was always on the level suited to his interlocutor; his pleasant disposition and affability caused him to be personally popular and admired for his talents.

But there was another side to his character. He was devoured by ambition; incapable of friendship; incapable of gratitude; he thought of nothing but himself; he was false and unscrupulous; a spendthrift; he respected neither God nor man, but concealed his sentiments under a veil of delicacy which took people in. He was much addicted to gallantry, but rather from vanity and ambition, and because he found many opportunities, than because his passions were strong. If his heart was false and his soul corrupt, his mind was equally defective; he was devoid of judgment, his plans were always badly conceived, and he was deficient in common sense; and so it was, that, in spite of his winning exterior and showy accomplishments, no public business ever prospered when entrusted to his hands.

To his fascinating personality and talents he added the advantage of high birth; but his fortune did not correspond to it, and this disarmed envy. He had made a conquest of everybody at Court—the most charming ladies, the most distinguished among those of more advanced years, the men of the highest rank and most important offices, the leaders of fashion of both sexes; he had gained all their hearts. The Cardinalate had always been the main object of his ambition, but he never could tolerate the drudgery of serious study or bring himself to acquire the qualifications necessary for a Bishop. He would have nothing to do with anything not on a grand scale; he wanted to play a part in public affairs and intrigues. He attached himself to Cardinal Bouillon, which nearly proved his ruin; but Torcy, whose friendship he had cultivated with a view to his designs, restored him to favour more than once. Since his last return to Court his position was most brilliant; even the King had come round to him, through the good offices of M. du Maine; and he was asked to Marly every time the King went there.

With all his wit he once let fall a silly compliment, so

mean and absurd that it still lives in contemptuous remembrance. He was following the King one day in the gardens of Marly when it came on to rain; the King said something polite to him about his coat, which was not very well suited for wet weather. "It is of no consequence, Sir," he replied; "Marly rain does not wet one." This speech was much laughed at and often cast up against him.

In this agreeable situation he began to be envious of the good fortune of Nangis, which was permanent, and which he had seen Maulevrier share for a time. He hoped for similar happiness for himself, and employed the same means to procure it. Madame d'O and the Maréchale de Cœuvres became his friends; he sought to make himself heard, and he did not seek in vain. Before long he took advantage of fine evenings in the gardens of Marly, in spite of the danger from the Swiss. Nangis grew pale with jealousy, and Maulevrier, though no longer in the running, became more furious than ever. The Abbé had the same fate as the others; every one perceived what was going on, but no one spoke of it above a whisper. The achievement of such a triumph at his age was not enough for him; he wanted something more solid. His knowledge of the arts and sciences and his experience of public affairs made him aspire to being received into the private room of the Duke of Burgundy; once admitted there, he hoped to attain to great things. To obtain admission he had first to gain the confidence of the man who kept the key; it was the Duke de Beauvilliers, who had retained the entire confidence of the young Prince after his education was finished. His official duties took up his whole time; he knew nothing about science, and not much about literature; the Abbé was not intimate with any of his friends; and there was no way of getting at him directly.

But the Duke de Chevreuse, who was apparently less occupied—I shall have occasion before long to explain why I say "apparently"—Chevreuse, I say, appeared to the Abbé to be more accessible. He was open to attack through his love of literature and science, and, when the ice was once broken, he was easy to get on with. The Abbé began by exchanging a few words with him during the short periods of his public visits to the King; drew him on by the bait of some problem to solve, or some curious question to investigate; contrived to keep him

in conversation in the Gallery ; and at last succeeded in obtaining admittance to his rooms, usually so difficult of access. Before long he captivated M. de Chevreuse ; he had the good fortune to meet M. de Beauvilliers at his rooms ; M. de Chevreuse spoke highly of him to his brother-in-law ; the two had only one heart and one mind ; having succeeded in pleasing one, he pleased the other ; and, having been welcomed as a guest by M. de Chevreuse, it was not long before he was received in like manner by M. de Beauvilliers.

These two men were entirely occupied by their duties, not to say smothered by them ; in the midst of the Court, where their rank and offices made them distinguished personages, they lived like hermits, in complete and voluntary ignorance of everything that was going on around them. Charmed with the Abbé de Polignac, and knowing nothing more of him, they both thought it would be a good thing to bring a man with so much agreeable knowledge into the society of the Duke of Burgundy, who was himself extremely well-informed and capable of deriving both profit and amusement from the conversation of the Abbé de Polignac. They had no sooner formed this resolution than they carried it into execution, and the Abbé's aspirations were crowned with success. We shall see before long to what extent he acquired the confidence of the young Prince ; it is not yet time to speak of it ; I must now go back a little.

I saw all Polignac's manœuvres with the Duke de Chevreuse. Unfortunately for myself, Christian charity did not keep me shut up in a bottle, as it did the two Dukes. I went one evening at Marly, as I did nearly every day, to chat with the Duke de Beauvilliers alone. By this time he treated me with a degree of confidence far beyond what my years entitled me to, and I was on such a footing that I could talk to him about anything, even about himself. I told him, therefore, what I had noticed of the Abbé de Polignac and the Duke de Chevreuse ; I added that no two men about the Court were less suited to each other ; that, with the exception of Torcy, all the Abbé's friends were antipathetic to himself and M. de Chevreuse ; that the latter would be the Abbé's dupe, and was merely being used as a stepping-stone to approach himself, and captivate him by his talk, as he had already got round M. de Chevreuse by his love of science ; that his only object was to

obtain admission, by their assistance, to the cabinet of the Duke of Burgundy.

I was too late. Beauvilliers was already won over ; but he had not as yet had much direct intercourse with Polignac, and had not thought of introducing him to the young Prince. " Well," said he, " what does all this reasoning lead to ? and what conclusion do you draw from it ? " " I draw this conclusion," I said : " that you and M. de Chevreuse know nothing about the character of the Abbé de Polignac ; that you will both be taken in by him ; that you will introduce him to the Duke of Burgundy ; and that he wants nothing more from you." " But what do you mean by taking us in ? " he asked, interrupting me ; " if his conversation can really be of use to the Duke of Burgundy, I do not see that we can do better than give the Duke the opportunity of profiting by it." " Very good " I said, " you interrupt me, and follow your own way of thinking ; now I, who know him thoroughly, tell you that no two men in the whole Court have less in common than the Abbé de Polignac and yourself ; and that he will find you very much in his way. I predict that, when you have once brought him into the society of the Duke of Burgundy, he will charm him like a Siren ; and you, to whom I speak, who have such good reason for thinking yourself in firm possession of your pupil's affections, you will be supplanted in them by him, and he will establish himself on your ruins ! "

At these words the whole aspect of the Duke changed. He assumed an air of vexation, and told me, with some severity, that he could not listen to me any more ; that I went much too far, and had too bad an opinion of other people ; that such a scheme as I had foretold had never entered the Abbé's head, and was quite impossible ; and he begged me never to mention it to him again. I was angry in my turn. " Very well," I said, " you shall be obeyed. You will see that I am right ; but I promise never to say another word on the subject." For a few minutes he remained cold and moody ; I began talking of something else ; he accepted the opening, and came back to his usual manner with me. Here I must leave the subject till I have occasion to mention it again ; and in the meantime I must begin the story of the cruel misfortunes of the year on which we are just entering.

CHAPTER XVIII

1706

Balls and fêtes at Marly—Death of Bellegarde—Ibrahim—I learn that I am to be appointed Ambassador to Rome—My astonishment—Other aspirants—My awkward position—The King finally decides not to send an Ambassador—My nomination exposes me to ill-will—Death of the Cardinal-Bishop of Orleans—His kindness to the Huguenots—Charitable actions—Banishment of du Charmel—The Jesuits and Cardinal de Noailles—The secrets of the Council-Chamber leak out—Anger of Chamillart.

AFTER the misfortunes of the past year the King perhaps thought it would be wise policy to devote the winter to pleasure and amusement, in order to encourage his own kingdom and show his enemies how little uneasiness their prosperity gave him. However that may be, it caused some surprise when he announced, quite at the beginning of the year, that there would be balls at Marly during every visit there, and named the men and ladies who were to dance at them; he also gave out that he would be pleased if people gave balls at Versailles, without much preparation, to the Duchess of Burgundy. Accordingly, a good many balls were given in her honour, and at Marly there were masquerades. One day the King insisted on all who were at Marly, men and women, even the oldest and gravest persons, going to the ball; and, so that there might be no exception, and that no one might feel embarrassed, he went himself with a gauze robe over his clothes. But such a light masquerade as this was for himself alone, every one else was obliged to be completely disguised. M. and Madame de Beauvilliers were so, thoroughly; and when I say that, to any one who knew the Court at that time, it is unnecessary to add another word. I had the pleasure of seeing them there, and having a quiet laugh with them over it all. The Court of St. Germain attended

all these balls ; and the King made some persons dance who were rather too old for it, such as the Duke de Villeroy, M. de Monaco, and some others. As for the Count de Brionne and the Chevalier de Sully, they danced so perfectly that no one thought of age in connection with them.

The affair of Surville had assumed another aspect, owing to the indiscretion of his friends ; the King was no longer willing to decide it himself, and sent it to the natural tribunal, that of the Marshals of France. They sentenced Surville to a year's imprisonment, dating from the day on which he had been taken to Arras, that is, to eight months in the Bastille ; La Barre got off with nothing. The King considered the sentence too lenient ; he deprived Surville of his commission, and gave his regiment to Barail, its Lieutenant-Colonel.

The kingdom of Valencia broke out into insurrection, led away by the example of the Catalans. Las Torr  s was sent there with fifteen squadrons and three battalions, all the troops there were in Aragon. He did what he could : took some small places by assault, defeated 2,000 rebels and gave no quarter ; but he could not extinguish the rebellion. Marshal de Tess   had just had a narrow escape at Saragossa, where the people ran to arms and besieged him in his house. It was on account of three peasants who were being led away prisoners by the regiment of Sillery, for having murdered a soldier in his quarters. The baggage of the regiment was plundered, the peasants were rescued, and forty grenadiers, with three of their officers, killed and wounded. Tess   and his principal officers had great difficulty in making their escape, and still more in putting down the revolt. As a slight compensation for these unfortunate events in Valencia and Aragon, Berwick took the castle of Nice.

Old Bellegarde died about this time at the age of eighty. He was a General of great distinction, and Commander of the Order of St. Louis. He had been very gallant ; he was kept for a long time by the wife of one of the chief magistrates of the Parliament, a man in high place and of great reputation in his profession, who suspected what was going on, to say the least of it ; but had his reasons for not making a fuss. One fine morning his wife, who was a masterful sort of woman, entered his room leading a little boy in petticoats. " Why, wife," he said, " what is that

child ? ” “ It is your son that I am bringing to you,” she replied ; “ is not he pretty ? ” “ How do you mean ? ” said he. “ My son ! you know very well we have none ! ” “ And I,” said the wife, “ know very well that I have got this one, and so do you ! ” The poor man, seeing her so determined, scratched his head, and, after a little consideration : “ Very well, wife,” he said, “ we will not make a fuss about this one, but you must promise not to give me any more. She promised, and kept her word ; but Bellegarde still kept on frequenting the house. So the little boy was brought up at home ; the mother was very fond of him ; the father did not like him at all, but was wise enough not to show it. They never called the child by any other name than Ibrahim,¹ and all their friends were accustomed to this nickname. I was an eye-witness of all this in my young days. The magistrate was a great friend of my father’s, and I saw Ibrahim very often, though I only knew his history in after-years. He wished to go into the same profession as his real father, and the other one made no opposition. He died in Italy ; I will not say where, nor what rank he held, for he left a son, who is a highly honourable man, and holds the same position in the magistracy which his supposed grandfather held till he died. I could not refrain from telling this curious story, as all the actors in it were so well known to me.

For the last five years Cardinal de Janson had been the King’s *chargé-d’affaires* at Rome ; he had discharged his duties with dignity, and more in the character of a good Frenchman than of a Cardinal. That had pleased neither the Pope nor his Court, who like to see everybody submissive to them. He had been seriously ill, and had asked urgently to be relieved. His request was granted after a time, but there was no Cardinal to take his place, and for want of any one else the Abbé de la Trémouille was destined to be *chargé-d’affaires*. This difficulty raised the question of sending an Ambassador to Rome ; there had been none since the short visit of the Duke de Chaulnes in that capacity for the election of a successor to Innocent XI.

Dangeau and d’Antin, two men of very different characters, but of similar ambition, both aspired to the appointment, in hopes that it would lead to a dukedom and Peerage. Dangeau relied on the important offices which his money

¹ After the hero of one of Madame Seudéry’s romances.

had procured for him, and which had made of him not exactly a *seigneur*, but, as La Bruyère said, with regard to his manners, a sort of copy of a *seigneur*; on his old familiarity with the King, in whose eyes he had the merit of constant assiduity and of unceasing flattery; and that of his wife with Madame de Maintenon, who was very fond of her. D'Antin rested his hopes on his birth, his relationship to the King's children, his wit and capacity, and his genius for intrigue. Dangeau had been thinking of this embassy for some time, and had taken every opportunity of making himself known to the Cardinals; he had gone so far as to make some presents to Cardinal Ottoboni, and had received letters from him, of which he boasted with some complacency.

Gualterio suggested to me that I should be the Ambassador. He was altogether in the French interest, and it was important to him that the French Ambassador at Rome should be a person on whom he could depend. I was only thirty years old, and, knowing the King's strong objection to employing young men in public affairs, I looked upon this suggestion as a chimera. Caillières spoke to me about it soon after. I said the same thing to him; adding the objection that I could hardly hope to be successful at Rome without ruining myself; moreover, that, considering the position I held already, I did not see how such an embassy could lead to anything.

A week after my first conversation with the Nuncio he came into my room one afternoon with a joyful look on his face, embraced me warmly, begged me not to let any one in, and to have the door of the antechamber closed so that his livery might not be recognised; and then told me that, to his great delight, I was to go to Rome as Ambassador. I made him repeat it twice; I could not believe it then; I told him the thing was impossible, and that it was only his desire for my appointment that made him think otherwise. Unable to restrain his impatience, he exacted a pledge of secrecy from me, and then told me that Torcy had just confided to him that the matter had been decided in the Council that morning, but he was not to tell me on behalf of the King till the Council had sat again. If one of the portraits on the wall had suddenly addressed me I could not have been more astonished. Gualterio urged me most strongly to accept; then, as it

was time for him to go to a dinner-party, we separated. I told Madame de Saint-Simon about it at once, and her surprise was as great as my own.

We sent at once to ask Caillières and Louville to come to us, and held a consultation with them; they were both of opinion that I could not refuse. After that I went to Chamillart and scolded him for not having warned me. He smiled at my anger, said the King had ordered him to say nothing about the matter; and advised me most strongly to accept. He was just starting for L'Étang, and we were to go to Marly, where he said we should meet next day. Then I went to the Chancellor, who said the same thing, but I could get no advice out of him. M. de Beauvilliers had gone off to Vaucresson directly after the Council, but I saw him when he came to Marly for the next meeting; he made the same excuse as the others for not warning me. The question now was to make up my mind before the proposal was made to me; and I feared lest Torcy might come to me with it at any moment.

I confess I felt flattered at having been selected for such an important embassy at my age, without having thought of it, and nobody having asked on my behalf. I had no acquaintance whatever with Torcy; M. de Beauvilliers was too cautious to have proposed me without first ascertaining whether the appointment would suit the state of my finances; the Chancellor was not in a position to ask favours; Chamillart would not have done it without telling me, and, moreover, not being on very good terms with Torcy, he would not have interfered in a matter which concerned his department.

After the King's death I got to know Torcy, and a real friendship sprang up between us, which always lasted. I asked him then how it came about that I was selected for Rome. He protested that he knew nothing about it, only that the King, having made up his mind to send an Ambassador there, and being worried by applications for the post from persons ambitious of a dukedom, which he was resolved not to grant—the King, I say, had stopped Torcy as he was beginning to read his despatches from Rome, and told him that an Ambassador must be appointed, that he wished for a Duke, and that the shortest way would be to look down the list and see who would be the best. Thereupon he took a little almanack, and began

reading out the names, that of M. d'Uzès being the first. Owing to my seniority he soon came to my name, whereupon he paused, and said : " What do you think of that one ? He is young, but a very proper person," and so on. Monseigneur, who wanted d'Antin to be appointed, said nothing ; the Duke of Burgundy supported me, as did the Chancellor and M. de Beauvilliers. Torcy also approved, but proposed to finish reading the list. Chamillart said he thought they would not find a better name in it. The King shut up his almanack, and said it was not worth while to seek further ; he decided to appoint me, but ordered the choice to be kept secret for a few days. That was all ; Torcy proceeded to read his despatches, and the question of the embassy was not mentioned again. Such was the account I heard, more than ten years later, from a thoroughly truthful man, who could have no reason for concealing anything from me.

Beauvilliers and Chamillart, separately, made an examination of my debts and my income, from a statement supplied by Madame de Saint-Simon ; and also an estimate of the expenses of the embassy. Both advised me to accept it, the Duke because, after careful consideration, he thought I could bear the expense without ruining myself ; and because, as he said, the King would never forgive me if I refused ; remembering my retirement from the Army, he would look upon me as an idler who would do nothing, and would make me feel his displeasure in a manner which would be more ruinous to my prospects than failure as an Ambassador could possibly be, even if the worst happened. He reminded me that I was on intimate terms with three out of the four Ministers, who would be ready to give me advice and cover up my mistakes if I committed any ; and, as for the other Minister, he knew him well, and could guarantee that he would not seek to injure me in any way. The Chancellor was of the same opinion, that a refusal would ruin me.

Chamillart used almost the same arguments, after which he spoke very openly to Madame de Saint-Simon and myself about his personal reasons for wishing me to accept. He was very anxious to establish his family on a sure foundation ; his son was very young, and his own position precarious. In case of a reverse of fortune he wished to be able to rely on the support of influential persons who

should be under an obligation to him, and they must be persons not only of sufficient capacity to rise in the world by his assistance, but also capable of a sense of gratitude. He thought I was such a person, and in his own interest he wished me to accept the embassy to Rome, as a stepping-stone to higher things ; feeling sure, he said, that if misfortune came upon him I should be a protector to his son, and perhaps to himself. He put his purse and his influence at our disposal without restriction, and said we might depend upon his giving us all the assistance in his power.

I yielded at last to these arguments, and accepted ; that is I made up my mind to accept ; and I confess I did so with pleasure. Madame de Saint-Simon, naturally more cautious and grieved at the thought of leaving her relations, was sorry, though convinced that it was right not to refuse. I cannot deny myself the pleasure of recording what each of these Ministers, quite independently of each other, said to me about her. She was only twenty-seven years of age, but they had come to know her well. They all three advised me, most strongly, to have no secrets from her in the affairs of the embassy ; to have her at my side when I read or wrote despatches, and to ask her opinion about everything. I never received advice which pleased me more ; and I do not know which is more to her credit, that she was worthy of such high praise, or that she always lived with me afterwards as if she had never heard that it had been given to her ; for she did hear of it, first of all from myself, and later on from the Ministers.

I had no opportunity of acting on this advice at Rome, as I did not go there ; but I had long been in the habit of consulting her, and I never in my life concealed anything from her. I must do myself the pleasure of saying a little more : I always found her counsels most wise, judicious, and useful ; I confess most gladly that she saved me from many annoyances, some of them very serious. I consulted her without reserve ; I found her advice of the greatest help, both as to my private conduct, and with regard to public affairs, with which I had a good deal to do in the last days of the King's reign, and throughout the Regency. Madame de Saint-Simon was a rare and delightful contrast to those useless wives to whom Ambassadors are strictly forbidden to communicate anything, and who think of

nothing but spending money and doing the honours. She compared even more favourably with those women of extraordinary capacity who like to make a parade of their influence. Hers was that quiet, unostentatious good sense which, far from pushing itself forward, seems to be ignored by its possessor; her conduct throughout life was uniformly charming, virtuous, and modest.

In the meantime my appointment gradually leaked out. Torcy said nothing to me on the subject; I was put off from one Council to another; and I did not know what answer to make to the inquiries of my friends. We returned to Versailles, and back to Marly again; at last the appointment was talked of openly. M. de Monaco spoke to me at a ball about my taking over such of his father's furniture and equipages as had been left at Rome; and when Madame de Saint-Simon or I danced, we heard people say: "There is the Ambassador, or the Ambassadors, dancing." The suspense was so unpleasant that I begged Torcy, through Caillières, to end it one way or the other. He sympathised with my embarrassment, and felt the impropriety of the situation; but he dared not hurry the King. The reason of the delay was that there were eighteen vacancies in the College of Cardinals; a fresh batch of appointments must be made before long, and all Rome was in a ferment about it; and it was hoped that the Pope would look more favourably on the Abbé de la Trémouille. The promotion of Cardinals, however, was still delayed, and in the meantime my appointment became a matter of notoriety at Rome as well as at Paris. The Duke of Burgundy took me aside one day at Marly and congratulated me, although I was not at all on intimate terms with him at that time. When I expressed some diffidence as to my capacity for such an appointment he encouraged me, and said it would be an excellent way of making myself acquainted with public affairs and fitting myself for high offices. He added that he was glad, for that reason, that I had made up my mind to accept; besides that the King would never have forgiven me if I had refused.

Just about this time the Countess de la Marek died at Paris, of small-pox. She was a daughter of the Duke de Rohan, as I mentioned when speaking of her marriage; and an intimate friend of Madame de Saint-Simon and Madame de Lausun, who had been with her in the convent

as girls. She was tall and well-proportioned ; very ugly, but her expression was so full of intelligence and dignity that one became accustomed to her face. She had a powerful and masculine mind, with great capacity and wide views ; but her manners were simple and natural, and her conversation charming. She was very trustworthy, and, though not expansive, she had an excellent heart. With her ability, courage, and ambition she would have gone far. She was a worthy niece of Madame de Soubise, who was passionately fond of her. She was generally regretted on account of her merit ; Madame de Saint-Simon wept bitterly when she heard of her death, and I was much grieved. Five or six hours later Madame de Saint-Simon and her sister had to go to a ball, their eyes still red and swollen with tears, for no excuse would have been admitted. The King knew little about natural feelings or the emotions of the heart. He was as jealous of his authority in the most frivolous amusements as in the highest affairs of State. He made the Duchess de Duras come to Marly and dance there in the first days of her mourning for the Marshal ; and we have seen, in connection with Madame, at the time of Monsieur's death, how little he cared for the most ordinary conventions of society.

I think I must now finish all this story of my proposed embassy ; and the promotion of Cardinals also fell at such an interesting crisis that I have no hesitation in mentioning it before its proper place. I was kept in suspense till the middle of April ; at last I heard that my fate would be decided at the next meeting of the Council. We were at Marly, and our rooms were in the same pavilion as Chamillart's ; I begged him to come to us when the Council was over, before going up to his own room. He came accordingly to Madame de Saint-Simon's room, where we were waiting for him impatiently. " You will be glad to hear," he said to her, " though I am very sorry, that the King has decided not to send an Ambassador to Rome. The Pope has at last consented to make the Abbé de la Trémouille a Cardinal ; he will at once announce the promotion, which has only been delayed by his dislike for him ; and the new Cardinal will remain at Rome as *chargé-d'affaires*." Madame de Saint-Simon was indeed delighted to hear it ; it seemed almost as if she had a presentiment of the discredit into which the King's affairs were about to fall in Italy ; of the

financial disorder which was the result of our defeats and misfortunes; and of the cruel situation in which these things would have placed us at Rome.

I had had plenty of time to make reflections which easily consoled me for the loss of the appointment, though my vanity had been flattered by it; but I did not know at the time how much harm the proposal had done me. Dangeau and d'Antin were furious at the preference shown me; so was Marshal d'Huxelles, who had hoped for the embassy himself. They naturally wished to cut short the career of a young man who seemed likely to rise at their expense; and, knowing how suspicious the King was of ability and knowledge, they set themselves to exaggerate those qualities in me, and to praise my appointment immoderately. M. and Madame du Maine had never forgiven my obstinate rejection of all their advances to me; they knew my sentiments about the usurped rank of the bastards; and they were alarmed and annoyed at the prospect of my coming to the front. It is only to the bad offices of M. du Maine, who was naturally timid and malevolent, that I can ascribe Madame de Maintenon's strange dislike for me. I was not aware of it at the time, but Chamillart told me of it after the King's death; he added that he had several times tried to reason her out of it, and that she had nothing particular to allege against me, but said vaguely that I was vainglorious, insubordinate, and full of schemes.

The report of my being a clever, well-read man, very capable of taking part in public affairs, was easily conveyed to the King by M. du Maine in such a manner as to poison his mind against me; and Madame de Maintenon spoke against me more openly. M. du Maine had supported the claims of d'Antin; besides having another grievance against me, he was vexed at his failure. That was quite enough; between them they contrived to rouse the King's suspicions to such a degree that he was actually afraid of me. I soon perceived a coldness in his manner. Like a general decline in bodily health, this state of things could only end in a dangerous illness; that is, in a sort of disgrace, from which I managed to extricate myself—but it is not yet time to speak of it.

The same impression with regard to me was conveyed to the mind of Monseigneur. D'Antin required no assistance there, but he found allies in Mademoiselle de Lislebonne and

Madame d'Espinoy. They were not ignorant of my feelings with regard to the rank and honours of their family, and that was the point on which they were most acutely sensitive. They could do what they liked with the worthy Monseigneur, and he accepted any account of my character which they were pleased to give him. Madame la Duchesse used her influence against me at this time, and still more later on, as I shall have occasion to mention in its place. Mademoiselle Choin also let herself be talked over by these ladies, who were her best friends, and by Marshal d'Huxelles, who paid great attentions to her, with such success that she actually made poor Monseigneur believe that the Marshal was the ablest man in the kingdom. Such was my situation at Court at this time, and it was not long before I became aware of it.

I must now wind up everything connected with Roman affairs ; I should have to interrupt the account of more interesting events if I put off mentioning the promotion of Cardinals till the time when it actually occurred, which was on the 17th of May. Nineteen new Cardinals were appointed ; among them were the learned and virtuous Casoni ; Corsini, who afterwards became Pope ; the Duke of Saxe-Weitz, whom I have mentioned so often ; the Abbé de la Tremouille ; our Nuncio, Gualterio ; and, unfortunately for the Church, Fabroni. Philippucci set a rare example of modesty and piety by refusing a Hat ; it was given instead to Conti, Nuncio in Portugal, afterwards Pope. The twentieth appointment remained "in petto."

During these long delays Torcy had leisure to reflect on the brilliant but dangerous part played in the Court by his friend the Abbé de Polignac. It is simply marvellous that the King should have remained in ignorance of it. M. de Beauvilliers for many reasons was anxious to get rid of Polignac. Torcy therefore thought he would do a good service to the King and to many other people, as well as to his friend, if he proposed him for the Auditorship of the Rota. The Abbé de Polignac was nominated to it accordingly ; he accepted the appointment as an honourable banishment, and, though Torcy convinced him at last that it was advisable to accept it, he went off as tardily as he could to take up his new functions.

The Bishop of Metz's affair was a death-blow to his uncle. It had brought him from Orleans, contrary to his usual

habits, at Christmas; and, though it ended in a manner thoroughly honourable for the Bishop of Metz, it broke the Cardinal's heart. He only lived six weeks afterwards; quite at the end of January he had to keep his bed, and he died on the night of the 3rd of February. In person he was rather short and very stout; he had the appearance of a village priest, not only in face but in dress, even after he became a Cardinal. I have already noted the purity of his morals, which he had kept from childhood, though brought up at Court and living in the midst of society; the general love and respect felt for him by people of all ages, his devotion to his diocese, and his lavish generosity. Two actions of his deserve to be recorded.

At the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, when the King, listening to bad advice, determined to convert the Huguenots by persecution, a regiment of dragoons was sent to Orleans, to be quartered in detachments about the diocese. As soon as it arrived the Bishop had all the horses stabled, sent for the officers, and told them that he wished them to have no table but his own; he begged that not a single dragoon might be sent out of the town; if there was not sufficient food for the men he undertook to supply it at his own expense; above all, he asked that nothing should be said to the Huguenots, and that no men should be billeted in their houses. He meant what he said, and was punctually obeyed. The stay of the regiment lasted a month, and was a heavy expense to him; at the end of that time he obtained its withdrawal, and a promise that no more dragoons should be sent to his diocese. This charitable conduct, so different from that of the Bishops of the neighbouring sees, won over nearly as many Huguenots as the barbarities to which they were exposed elsewhere, and these converts became so of their own free-will, without constraint and without bribery. Nothing was hurried; they were given sound preliminary instruction; and not one of them reverted to his former errors. It required no little courage to show disapproval of what was going on everywhere, and of a policy so dear to the King's heart. The blessing of Heaven followed the Bishop's conduct, and prevented it from bringing down on his head the ill-will, and even worse consequences, which might naturally have been expected from it.

The other action of which I speak, also one of charity.

was not public and was fraught with less danger to the Bishop ; but it was none the less admirable. Besides his public alms, which as a rule swallowed up all the revenue he derived from his see, he gave away large sums in secret. He gave a pension of 400 livres to a poor ruined gentleman, who had neither wife nor child, and nearly always lived at the Bishop's table when he was in residence at Orleans. One day the Bishop's servants missed two valuable pieces of plate, and one of them had noticed this gentleman examining them closely. They told their suspicions to their master, who could hardly believe them, but began to think there was something in it because the gentleman did not make his appearance as usual. After some days he sent for him, and, talking to him privately, got him to confess that he was guilty. The Bishop said he must have been in terrible straits to bring himself to commit such an action, and asked why he had not confided his distress to him. He pulled 20 louis out of his pocket and gave them to him ; begged him to come and dine at his house as usual, and told him he would never think again of an action which he felt sure would never be repeated. He laid strict injunctions on his servants never to speak of their suspicions ; and the story only became known through the gentleman himself, who was overwhelmed with confusion and gratitude.

When the Duchess of Burgundy was about to give birth to her first child, the Prince who only lived a year, the King sent off a courier to Orleans with express orders to the Bishop to come at once, and remain at Court till the confinement was over ; and he had to obey. The King had so great a respect for him that he wished the child to be sprinkled by no hand but his. The poor Bishop was very fat, and, as he sat waiting in the antechamber dressed in rochet and hood, he perspired so freely that the floor round him was quite wet.

Great pressure was brought to bear upon him by his friends to induce him to resign his see after he became Cardinal, but he would not hear of it. He said he had worked in his diocese for many years, and saw some of the fruits of his labours ; he would not expose his precious harvest to be trampled underfoot during his lifetime ; he had useful schools, which might be ruined ; pious, industrious and learned clergy ; and excellent ecclesiastics who helped him to rule the diocese ; he feared they might be tormented

and driven out ; and for this reason alone he was determined to remain Bishop to the last. We shall see that he was a true prophet.

It was discovered after his death, from his servants, that he tortured his body habitually with instruments of penance, and that he used to get up in the middle of the night and spend an hour in prayer. He received the last Sacraments with great piety, and died the following night, as devoutly as he had lived.

His death was a source of grief to the whole Court, to the King more than any one. The Bishop of Metz, who owed everything to his uncle and arrived in time to see him on his death-bed, seemed to feel his loss very little, to the scandal of the Court. The see of Orleans was given to the Bishop of Angers. Pelletier, his father, wrote from his place of retirement to the King, begging him to allow his son to refuse the translation. But the King, urged on by Madame de Maintenon and the Bishop of Chartres, insisted ; and St. Sulpice, which, with its usual gross stupidity, looked upon the diocese of Orleans as a plague-spot, made the Bishop of Angers accept. It would seem that God did not approve of the appointment, for the new Bishop died within two years. The persecution of the diocese was reserved for the Bishop of Aire, brother of Armenonville, who had been rendered almost imbecile by a sunstroke, and never got over it, though he lived for a long time afterwards.

The King had given Marshal de Villeroy 300,000 livres on the *Octroi* of Lyons, payable in six years at the rate of 50,000 livres per annum. The six years had expired, and the King now made him a similar gift on the same conditions. People sometimes find out that it is a mistake to pay a bad workman in advance. The Government of Lyons had been given to Alincourt, the Marshal's grandfather ; it had remained in the Villeroy family ever since ; and the authority of the Governor had grown till he was, in fact, the despot of the place. He had the sole right of appointment to all the municipal offices, including that of Provost of the merchants. The Intendant of Lyons has nothing to do with the revenues of the town, which are immense, because they are derived chiefly from the trade of the place, and Lyons has always been one of the chief commercial centres of the kingdom. The Provost of the merchants is the sole administrator, responsible only to

the Governor, who is himself responsible to nobody. It is easy to understand that, with such authority, the office of Governor is a gold-mine ; besides that, the great merchants of Lyons and the other burgesses are continually in need of the Governor's protection in various matters.

I remember that I was dining with Dangeau one day, in the company of Marshal de Villeroi, and several Ambassadors and others (for Dangeau liked to do the honours of the Court, and did them very well and magnificently), when, in order to pass himself off as a great *seigneur*, he let slip a funny piece of conceit. "Gentlemen," he said, looking at the company, "of all us Governors of provinces it must be confessed that Marshal de Villeroi is the only one who has preserved his authority." I burst out laughing, and Madame de Dangeau, who saw me, could not refrain from smiling ; for she was the first to make fun of her husband's follies, though they got on together capitally. He had purchased the Government of Touraine, and wanted to let the foreigners know that, he, too, was a provincial Governor.

The Grand Provost obtained a *brevet de retenue* of 300,000 livres on his office for his son, who married a very rich young lady named Du Hamel, of Picardy—a marriage which did not turn out happily. Heudicourt the younger, who was a malicious sort of satyr, made some very funny verses about these Montsoreaux,¹ so quaint and natural that, some one having repeated them to Marshal de Boufflers when in attendance on the King during Mass, he could not refrain from bursting out laughing. He was the gravest and most serious man in France, and the greatest slave to propriety. The King turned round in astonishment, which was not diminished when he saw the Marshal in fits of laughter, the tears running down his cheeks. When he got back to his room he asked him what had happened to put him in such a state, and at Mass too. The Marshal repeated the verses, whereupon the King went into greater fits of laughter than the Marshal had done ; and for more than a fortnight he could not help laughing every time the Grand Provost or one of his sons came under his eyes. The verses had a great currency, and the town and Court were much amused by them.

About this time I was truly grieved by the banishment

¹ Their family name was Montsoreau,

of M. le Charmel, with whom I had kept up a close friendship for a long time. The circumstances of this banishment are worthy to be recorded here, and it is a story which requires some explanation. I have already mentioned Le Charmel's life at Court and in society, and the manner of his retirement; the kind way in which the King spoke to him on that occasion, and the austerity with which he replied that he would never see him again. I must now explain his mode of life since his retreat. He was a man given up to continual penances, hair-shirts, and sharp, iron points; excessive fasting, though he was naturally a great eater; he was, in short, pitilessly harsh to himself. He used to spend Lent at La Trappe, living on the same fare as the monks, and not missing one of their services, by night or day. On Good Friday he used to remain on his knees, without the slightest change of position, from the end of Matins till the office: that is, from four in the morning till ten o'clock. In spite of all this he was always cheerful and pleasant. It is hardly possible to find a stupider man; but the manners of a man of the world which he had acquired in the best society concealed his natural dullness. Except Latin, which he had learnt at school, he knew nothing beyond what he got from reading religious books; and, being naturally inclined to austerity, he found most of his friends among the Jansenist party. He became very intimate with M. Nicole, and perhaps still more so with M. Boileau, a disciple of Port-Royal, whom M. de Luynes had employed to educate the Count d'Albert and the Chevalier de Lynes in their boyhood.

This is the same Boileau who, while living in the house of the Archbishop of Paris, afterwards Cardinal de Noailles, and eating his bread, wrote that strange book against him called "A Problem," which the Archbishop wrongly attributed to the Jesuits. We have seen with what kindness the Archbishop got rid of his ungrateful guest, who had not enough to keep him from starving, by appointing him a Canon of St. Honoré. It is impossible to find excuse for such base ingratitude, or for Boileau's meanness in allowing the blame to fall on the Jesuits, with whom Cardinal de Noailles was never on good terms. The Cardinal liked Le Charmel, and had shown him much kindness; but when this scandal occurred, Le Charmel ceased to visit him, and kept up very friendly relations with Boileau. The

Cardinal was not so much offended as hurt by his conduct : he begged Le Charmel to come and see him, and when he had obtained this concession with some difficulty, spoke to him in a most friendly way. All his advances were in vain : Le Charmel became more bitter than ever. The Jansenists, annoyed because the Cardinal would not go all lengths with them, had bewitched this proselyte, who never could be brought to see the ingratitude and treachery of Boileau ; to such a pitch of infatuation had a man, upright and pious by nature, been reduced by his want of intelligence and his blind submission to persons whom he regarded as saints. Such was Le Charmel's unpardonable fault with regard to Cardinal de Noailles, who must have been superior to all human weaknesses if he did not feel his conduct acutely. We must now come to the mistake which Le Charmel afterwards committed in his behaviour to the King.

We have seen, in the case of Troisvilles, to whom the King barred the door of the Academy, that he was very touchy about people who had retired from Court and never saw him. I did not mention that on the same day when he refused Troisvilles, while out walking at Marly, the King expressed himself very bitterly on this subject. He praised those who led a solitary life in the country ; spoke at some length about M. de Saint-Louis, his brilliant conduct in the Dutch war and elsewhere, of which he had been an eye-witness, and his private life at La Trappe. He did not find fault, he said, with those at a distance for not making a long journey to see him ; but he was very severe on people who had gone into retirement at Paris, or in its immediate neighbourhood. He praised Pelletier, Fieubet, and the Chevalier de Gisors, who came to pay their respects once or twice a year, and said they were people of as much distinction, to say the least of it, as Troisvilles and Le Charmel. With them he showed much displeasure, and repeated several times that they were more mixed up in intrigues and affairs since their retirement than before it ; all their religion, he said, consisted in neglect of him. The Duke de Tresmes, a great friend of Le Charmel, listened with a sickly smile, and put in a word first on one side and then on the other. Cayove, who was also a friend of his, intervened in the conversation, and, with some flattery, paid his court by abusing his friend. No one would guess

who took it upon himself to defend Le Charmel : it was a man who hardly knew him, a great courtier too, but a courtier with some self-respect, who knew that Cavoye was Le Charmel's friend, and was indignant at what he heard. It was Harcourt who undertook his defence, and did so with so much dignity and ability that the King changed the subject and talked of something else.

Apparently Cavoye made his reflections ; Harcourt had brought him to a proper sense of his conduct. He wrote to Le Charmel and told him what had passed at Marly, without mentioning his own share in it ; and advised him to send him such a letter that he might be able to tell the King that Le Charmel wished to have the honour of appearing in his presence, after so many years, but did not venture to do so without feeling sure that he would be welcome. Le Charmel showed me the letter, but was so determined not to listen to Cavoye's suggestion that I could produce no effect upon him.

About a fortnight later the King touched on the same subject, again at Marly, and all of a sudden asked Cavoye what Le Charmel was doing and how long it was since he had heard from him. Cavoye at once sent word to Le Charmel, and urged him to follow his advice, telling him that the King had evidently expected to hear something from him after the first conversation, and that he would be very much offended if he did not take the hint now. Le Charmel again showed me the letter ; I told him there was only one thing to do : he must write to Cavoye saying that he had not supposed that the King would remember him, but, since His Majesty was so kind as to do so, he asked Cavoye to obtain leave for him to come and pay his respects, with a lively sense of His Majesty's former goodness, etc. I appealed to his religious feelings and his duty as a subject to show proper respect for his Sovereign. I added that it was not only his duty, but a wise precaution to avoid a storm which might be gathering with regard to his Jansenist indiscretions ; and that a single morning would be well sacrificed with such an object. But I could not persuade him ; all he would do was to write two letters, one to the King himself, the other to Cavoye, such as he could show him. This was not received very graciously. The fact was, that Le Charmel could not trust himself ; he was afraid of a too favourable reception ; after all his

years of penance he felt that he still had a hankering after his old life of favour and pleasure. For that reason he had already refused to co-operate with Madame de Maintenon in some charitable work for which she had asked his assistance.

I must now return to Cardinal de Noailles. During the preceding year, 1705, there had been a Grand Assembly of the clergy, and though these assemblies are only concerned with their temporal affairs, the Cardinal, who presided over it, thought it right to take the opportunity to establish a rule on some points of discipline and morals. The project was not his alone, and, moreover, he had to take measures in concert with some of the leading prelates. The Jesuits, who always kept an eye upon him and were on their guard in any matter which might touch their doctrine or system of morals, got wind of his project; some false brother revealed to them the resolutions, word for word, which he was about to move in the Assembly. Father de la Chaise spoke to the King about them, but at that time he was very fond of the Cardinal, and would not listen to anything against him; so that the confessor, a wise and prudent man, let the matter drop, feeling sure that he would have a better opportunity before long. When the Assembly met, his spies kept him informed of everything that was to be done. He told the King beforehand of each proposal, and what day it was to be moved. The King, who had always been on his guard against anything brought forward in the Assembly not affecting the temporal interests of the clergy, spoke to the Cardinal about it; but he was determined to do what he thought right at any risk to himself, and continued to bring forward his proposals respecting discipline and morals. The Jesuits, furious at having reaped so little benefit from the treachery which had been practised on Cardinal de Noailles, made use of the confessor to increase the King's anger; and the Cardinal had to submit to a good many mortifications. I heard of it all through the Archbishop of Arles, who had private reasons for disliking Cardinal de Noailles, and, with his ambitious views, took care to be on good terms with the Jesuits.

The consequence was that, by the time the Assembly broke up, the Cardinal was in very bad odour with the King, who suspected him strongly of being a Jansenist.

It was always easy to raise the suspicion of Jansenism in his mind, for he was profoundly ignorant of such matters, had been brought up in the most extreme prejudices regarding them, and never would listen to a word from any one who might have enlightened him. Those who profited by his ignorance had only to bring the charge of Jansenism against any one they disliked, and he was proscribed at once, without his knowing anything about it, without a hearing, and without the smallest hope of recovering his position. The Cardinal's family were much afflicted by his disgrace, which was none the less real and effective because it was not openly manifested ; Madame de Maintenon was also grieved at it, for the Jesuits had no hold over her. There was no way of escape for the Cardinal except by making some open manifestation against the Jansenists, which might do away with the King's suspicions. But how was he to do it ? His first object was always the preservation of discipline and good morals, and he would not sacrifice his friends. Yet he felt the necessity of doing something, even with a view to his spiritual usefulness ; for his present position was a great hindrance to his work.

Towards the beginning of 1705 strenuous attempts had been made to arrest Father Quesnel in the Spanish Netherlands, and it was only with great difficulty that he escaped from Brussels into Holland. He kept up a correspondence with Paris, and Cardinal de Noailles was informed that his messengers were received and concealed by Le Charmel. He thought they were busy about some publications against himself, and the old sore of " A Problem " was reopened ; he discovered that the reports about Le Charmel were true, and was much incensed against him. It must be confessed that Le Charmel was extremely indiscreet where Jansenism was concerned. He made a sort of religion of it, and never would listen to reason ; his conduct kept his friends continually on thorns.

Pontchartrain told me, one morning at Marly, that the King had just ordered a *lettre de cachet* to be sent to Le Charmel, banishing him to his house near Château-Thierry within twenty-four hours. Knowing that I was a great friend of his, Pontchartrain told me this under a promise of the strictest secrecy, for fear lest I should say something imprudent in my first emotion of surprise and anger if I heard of it in conversation. That evening, while the band

was playing, the Countess de Mailly came and sat by me, and told me the same thing. I had to pretend surprise, because of my promise to Pontchartrain; but I was astonished in good earnest when she told me that the blow came from Cardinal de Noailles, who had told the King that morning that Le Charmel was a Jansenist and a mischief-maker, going about from house to house trying to convert people to Jansenism, and telling Father de la Tour, as chief of the party, that all was lost if he showed weakness: that, in short, Le Charmel was a man whom it was absolutely necessary to banish from Paris. She said she had this on the very best authority: that of her aunt, Madame de Maintenon. We did not prolong our conversation for fear people might remark that we were talking about something interesting. This happened on the 10th of February, 1706, a Wednesday, the day on which Cardinal de Noailles always had an audience of the King; and also the day on which Chamillart usually went to L'Étang till Saturday.

Next morning I was thinking of going to see Chamillart, when Marshal de Noailles came up to me and told me of Le Charmel's banishment, adding that he had received a letter from him asking that he might be allowed to retire to the Monastery of the Camaldules of Gros-Bois¹; that he had made the request, and been angrily refused. He expressed grief and astonishment at this unforeseen blow, and begged me to find out the reason for it through Pontchartrain. Knowing what I did, I was doubly angry at the Marshal's dissimulation, and at the thought of the snare my poor friend had fallen into in going to him for assistance. I replied abruptly that the Marshal was in a better position to know about it than I was, since Le Charmel's life was such that he could only be attacked on a question of doctrine, which came under the cognisance of his brother the Cardinal; and he had been closeted with the King for a long time on the previous morning. Thereupon the King came out of his room: we parted, and never again said a word to each other on the subject.

I went straight off to dine at L'Étang, where I told Chamillart of Le Charmel's misfortune. He replied that he knew it already. I said I could tell him something which he did not know, and thereupon, without naming

¹ A house of retreat on the model of one established by St. Romuald, in the plain of Campo-Maldoli in Tuscany.

any one, repeated what I had heard from Madame de Mailly. I had not finished what I was saying, when Chamillart, usually so tranquil and self-contained, burst into fury ; he swore, stamped his feet, and was beside himself with anger. I asked him what was the matter. "The matter !" he said, striking the table with his fist, "the matter is that nothing that goes on in the King's room is kept secret. What you now tell me was told me by the King yesterday, word for word, and he forbade me to mention it to any one. I see that you know all about it ; others may know it too ; and it is very hard for an honest man, accustomed to be trusted with the most important secrets, to see that they are communicated to others, and that he may be suspected of letting them become known." He told me that the same thing had happened before : that he had gone straight to the King, and begged him not to make him responsible for secrets which he had been pleased to make known to others ; and that the King confessed to having told the secret in question to another person.

Being now quite certain whence the blow proceeded, I sent to warn Le Charmel, but he was already gone. It is wonderful how meekly and humbly this man, naturally so impetuous, received his *lettre de cachet*, and how punctually he obeyed it. I tried by various means to obtain his pardon, but the King was too angry. Le Charmel would have been glad enough to regain his liberty, but he would not take any steps himself to do so, being persuaded that it was God's will that he should submit to an additional penance not of his own choosing ; and, having from his heart forgiven those who had inflicted it, he was at perfect peace with himself. Beauvau, his nephew and heir, was married in Lorraine, where he, under the name of M. de Craon, afterwards made such a splendid fortune ; he and his wife were already enjoying the first-fruits of the favour which afterwards brought them so many millions and such distinguished titles. The Duke of Lorraine offered to intercede with the King for Le Charmel, but he refused, and begged to be allowed to remain where God had placed him. He lived for some years afterwards. We shall see at the time of his death with what harshness the King treated him, and how hopeless it was to expect any mitigation of his sentence. It is possible that the King's severity hastened his end.

CHAPTER XIX

1706

Return of M. de Vendôme—His character and habits—He insults the Bishop of Parma—The latter replaced as Ambassador by Alberoni—In what respect Alberoni considers Vendôme to resemble the angels—He leaves the service of the Duke of Parma and devotes himself to Vendôme—Astonishing reception of Vendôme at Court—Character of the Grand-Prior—The Duke of Berwick made a Marshal and appointed to command in Spain—Death of Queen Catherine of England—Two marriages—Joyeux—Dumont—Return of Maulevrier—His eccentric conduct—His dangerous ravings in delirium—He throws himself out of a window—Red eyes of the Duchess of Burgundy—Departure of the Abbé de Polignac—Scurrilous verses against the Duchess of Burgundy—Three desertions—State of the army—Vendôme defeats the enemy at Calcinato—Siege of Barcelona—Projected siege of Turin entrusted to La Feuillade.

THE return of M. de Vendôme from Italy at this time afforded a really extraordinary spectacle to the Court and town. He had acquired considerable reputation by his victories, such as they were, and an influence over the King's mind which was quite incomprehensible; he knew himself to be the hero of a powerful clique; all this inspired him with a desire to revisit the Court, and enjoy his brilliant situation. Before long we shall see him acquire an incredible ascendancy; it will be well, therefore, before relating his arrival, to give some description of him, especially as up to the present I have spoken of him only casually. Some of the details which I shall have to mention are of a surprising nature, but they are necessary to make his portrait life-like.

In person he was of the middle height, rather stout, but active and vigorous; his countenance was very noble, and his bearing haughty. His manners and conversation were easy and graceful; he had much natural though uncultivated ability; he spoke easily, and his eloquence was sustained by a boldness which eventually developed into the most unbounded effrontery. He had great knowledge of the world, of the Court, and of the personages who came to the

front there in succession ; under a show of indifference he was at all times skilful in the art of turning his knowledge to his own advantage. Above all, he was a thorough courtier, and, relying on the King's prejudice in favour of illegitimate birth, he contrived to turn even his worst vices to profit. He took care to be polite when he thought it necessary, but he did not extend his politeness to many people ; to those who, he thought, might be insulted with impunity he could be extremely insolent. With the lower orders his manners were familiar and popular ; it was an affectation which concealed his vanity and made him liked by the vulgar herd ; but in reality he was pride personified ; it was a pride which made him think nothing beyond his reach, and to which he sacrificed everything. As he rose in rank and favour his haughtiness and obstinacy grew in proportion, so that he would never listen to a word of advice, and became inaccessible to everybody except a little group of sycophants and flunkeys. Flattery, admiration, and at last, adoration, were the only means of approaching this demi-god, who used to propound the most absurd theories without anybody venturing to disagree with him, much less to contradict him.

No one understood better than he did the meanness of the French character, and no one ever turned it to greater profit. By degrees he accustomed the junior officers of his army to call him " Monseigneur " and " Your Highness," and this gangrene soon spread to the Lieutenant-Generals and persons of the greatest distinction, who, following each other like sheep, never ventured after a time to call him anything else. From a custom it soon began to be considered his right, and any one who omitted to give it to him ran the risk of being insulted.

Though the King had formerly been licentious with women, there was one vice which he always looked upon with abhorrence. Nobody was more addicted to it than M. de Vendôme ; he made no more mystery of it than of the most ordinary gallantry ; yet, strange to say, the King, though perfectly aware of it, never showed displeasure, nor allowed it in any way to interfere with his favour. M. de Vendôme lived in this scandalous way wherever he went, at Court, at Anet, and with the army. We have seen with what audacious effrontery he twice made a public retreat in order to undergo a course of mercury, and how

his health became a common topic of conversation at Court, in pursuance of the example set by the King, who would never have forgiven a Son of France for conduct which his extraordinary favour towards Vendôme caused him to treat with such indulgence in his case.

His indolence was inconceivable. More than once he was within an ace of being taken prisoner because he would persist in remaining in comfortable quarters at too great a distance from his army ; he sometimes allowed the enemy to gain great advantage and risked the success of his campaign because he could not make up his mind to leave a camp where he found himself at his ease. When in command of an army he saw little with his own eyes ; he left the business of reconnoitring to his subordinates ; and yet he very often disbelieved their reports. This was because he could not bear any interference with the routine of his daily life. He was extremely dirty in his person, and proud of it ; his foolish flatterers called him a man of simple habits. His bed was always full of dogs and bitches, which sometimes produced their puppies by his side. One of his favourite theories was that everybody had the same dirty habits, though all people were not honest enough to admit it. He maintained this theory one day in conversation with the Princess of Conti, the most refined and scrupulously clean person in the world.

When with the army he rose rather late, and went at once to his close-stool, where he wrote his letters and gave out the morning orders.¹ Any one who had business with him, even persons of the highest distinction, had to see him then ; he had accustomed the army to this infamy. Seated there, he used to eat a hearty breakfast while listening to reports or giving out his orders, many spectators standing around him ;—I apologise for these disgusting details ; they are necessary to make his character understood. When all this was over he dressed, and played at ombre or picquet ; or, if it was absolutely necessary for him to mount his horse for some purpose, that was the time. On his return he gave out the parole and countersign, and the day was over for him. He had a sumptuous supper with his familiar friends, for he was a great eater and extraordinarily greedy, though he did not care for refined dishes ; he was particularly fond

¹ Marshal Boufflers, writing to Madame de Maintenon about Vendôme, remarks that a General cannot command an army from his close-stool.

of fish, and liked it better stale, and even stinking, than fresh. The conversation at his table consisted of arguments and disputes; but the one indispensable ingredient was flattery and praise from everybody.

He would never have forgiven any one who ventured to find fault with him. He liked to pose as the greatest captain of his day, and used to speak in the most unbecoming manner of Prince Eugène and other Generals. The slightest contradiction would have been a crime. The private soldiers and subaltern officers adored him for his familiarity with them, and because of the licence which he tolerated in order to gain their hearts. He made up for it by the haughtiness with which he treated persons of birth, or high rank in the army. He treated the greatest personages in Italy with the same insolence. That was what made the fortune of the famous Alberoni.

The Duke of Parma had some business to transact with M. de Vendôme, and sent the Bishop of Parma to negotiate it. The Bishop was very much astonished at being received by M. de Vendôme on his close-stool, and still more so when, in the midst of the conference, he rose and completed his operations before his eyes. He was so indignant that, without finishing his business, he went off to Parma, and told his master that nothing should induce him to return after what had happened. Alberoni was a gardener's son, who, conscious of his own ability, had taken minor orders so that his gown might give him access to quarters which would have been closed to his workman's blouse. He was a funny fellow, and the Duke of Parma treated him like a footman who amuses one; but, while he was amused by him, he perceived that he was intelligent and might be made useful in business. He thought he was a good enough Ambassador to be received by M. de Vendôme in such a way, and entrusted him with the completion of the business which the Bishop had begun.

Alberoni, who had no dignity to keep up, and knew well enough what M. de Vendôme was, determined to please him at any cost, in order to bring his negotiation to a successful issue, and advance himself in his master's favour. He was received in the same manner, and discussed the business, enlivening it by some jokes which amused the General the more because he had paved the way for them by judicious flattery.

Vendôme behaved as he had done before the Bishop;

whereupon Alberoni cried out, "O culo d'angelo!" and ran to kiss the object in question. Nothing contributed more to his advancement than this infamous buffoonery.¹

The Duke of Parma often had occasion to negotiate with M. de Vendôme, and, seeing how well Alberoni had done on this occasion, always employed him; he, on his part, took care to become familiar with Vendôme's principal servants, and prolonged his visits as much as possible. He cooked for M. de Vendôme, who liked extraordinary dishes, some cheese soup and other strange messes, which he thought excellent. M. de Vendôme insisted on Alberoni eating them with him; Alberoni ingratiated himself; and before long, thinking that he had a better chance of fortune in a household of Bohemians and eccentrics than at the Duke's Court, he changed masters, making M. de Vendôme believe that for his sake he was sacrificing all his prospects at Parma. Very soon, without giving up his trade of buffoon and compounder of soups and stews, he became M. de Vendôme's chief secretary, and the one to whom he confided his most secret despatches. That gave great offence to the others, and their jealousy rose to such a pitch that one of them drove Alberoni in front of him for half a mile, beating him with a stick, in sight of the whole army. M. de Vendôme was displeased, but nothing came of it; and Alberoni, who was not the man to let a trifle like that turn him out of his road to fortune, made his beating an additional merit in the eyes of his master.

Vendôme arrived at Marly, where we were, on the 12th of February. There was a prodigious noise and bustle; all the scullions, all the chairmen, all the servants of the Court, left what they were doing to surround his post-chaise. Everybody flocked to his room as soon as he got there. The Princes of the Blood, who had been so angry at his being selected for a command in preference to them, were the very first to arrive there; and, as may be supposed, the two bastards were not far behind them. The Ministers hastened to him, and so did all the courtiers; to such a degree that the saloon was absolutely deserted except by ladies. M. de Beauvilliers was at Vaucresson; as for myself, I contented myself with looking on, and did not go to prostrate myself before the idol.

¹ Madame also relates this story, almost in the same words. (Corr. of Duchess of Orleans, 17th of November, 1718.)

The King and Monseigneur sent for him ; as soon as he could manage to change his clothes, he went to the saloon, borne along in triumph by the crowd rather than surrounded by it. Monseigneur stopped the band playing while he embraced him ; the King sent for him to Madame de Maintenon's room, embraced him several times, and told him he would see him again next day at his leisure ; next day, accordingly, he had an audience which lasted more than two hours.

Chamillart, under the pretext of working with him more at his ease at L'Étang, gave him a superb entertainment there two days in succession ; and Pontchartrain, Torcy, and all the most distinguished *seigneurs* of the Court thought they would please the King by following his example. People vied with each other in entertaining Vendôme : he could not accept nearly all his invitations, and it was considered an honour to be asked to meet him. There never was such a triumph as his ; it is not too much to say that everybody, Princes of the Blood, Ministers, the most distinguished noblemen, were all effaced before him ; and, if the King still remained King, it seemed to be only to do greater honour to Vendôme. The common people joined in the acclamations at Versailles and Paris ; his carriage was surrounded in the streets by shouting crowds ; when he went to the Opera every seat was taken beforehand, and the price of admission was doubled, as when a new piece is announced for representation.

Vendôme received all this homage as if it were his due ; nevertheless, he was surprised at the universal madness. Though he had not intended to make a long stay, he feared this enthusiasm would not last till he went away ; to make himself less common he asked the King's permission to spend the interval between two visits to Marly at Anet. He was only two days at Versailles, and he was good enough to gratify Monseigneur by staying one night at Meudon. He went to Anet with a few chosen friends ; but the Court was a desert till the next move to Marly, while the *château* and village of Anet were filled with people up to the garrets. The King, usually so much offended if he was neglected, no matter what the cause might be, was pleased at Versailles being deserted for Anet ; and asked people whether they had been there, or when they intended to go.

Everything showed that it was deliberately intended to

make a hero of Vendôme; he realised it, and resolved to profit by it. He renewed his pretension to be allowed to command the Marshals of France; and how could such a trifle be refused to a man who was proclaimed to be the God of War in person? His commission as Marshal was drawn up accordingly in the same terms as that of M. de Turenne, which had hitherto been unique. But that was what M. de Vendôme and M. du Maine wanted; they wished him to be made superior to the Marshals on the ground of his birth alone. Vendôme proposed that a clause to that effect should be inserted in his commission. I do not know how Marshal de Villeroy got wind of it, but he did hear of it in time to remonstrate with the King. The Marshal was at that time at the height of his favour; he prevailed, and M. de Vendôme was informed that nothing would be added to his commission, which would be exactly similar to that of M. de Turenne. He was angry, and refused it point blank. The refusal was singularly bold, but he knew the man he had to deal with and the influence of his own supporters. It was not long since the King had peremptorily refused to allow him to command even such Marshals as had been appointed since he had been in chief command; there was a greater distance between that position and the commission now offered him, making him senior to all the Marshals, than between such a commission and what he asked, namely, the right to command them by virtue of his birth. He thought that, before long, he should get what he wanted; and we shall see, in the course of this very year, that he was not mistaken.

His brother, though not on very good terms with him, went to see him at Anet, to get him to procure his return to favour. Vendôme offered to present him to the King and to obtain for him a pension of 10,000 crowns; but the insolent Grand-Prior refused. He would be satisfied with nothing short of his return to Italy with the command of an army; and when his brother returned to Court, he went off to give vent to his rage at Clichy.

The Grand Prior had all his brother's vices, and he had this advantage over him, that for the last thirty years he had every night been put to bed dead drunk—a custom which he faithfully kept up during the remainder of his life. He had not one single qualification as a General; his cowardice was notorious, though he tried to conceal it under

the most revolting braggadocio ; he carried his brother's pride to the pitch of insolence, for which reason none of his officers would see him, except some obscure subalterns ; he was a liar, a cheat, a rogue, and, as we have seen in connection with his brother's affairs, a thief. In short, he was a dishonourable man to the very marrow of his bones ; overbearing and insolent, yet singularly mean and servile to get what he wanted ; ready to do anything, and to put up with anything, for two or three crowns, and yet the most disorderly spendthrift who ever existed. He had considerable ability, and had been singularly handsome in his youth. To sum up, it is impossible to conceive a viler, a more contemptible, and, at the same time, a more dangerous beast.

The siege of Barcelona was projected ; and it seemed as if Tessé would not be able to see to everything by himself, for it was necessary to maintain an army in Galicia to keep the Portuguese in check, if possible, while operations were going on in Catalonia. The triumphant return of Madame des Ursins had caused her to forget her quarrel with Berwick about Orry's affair ; he was thoroughly acquainted with the Portuguese frontier, and the Court of Madrid asked that he might be sent to command the French forces in that quarter. The King took the opportunity to show his favour to persons of his birth,¹ no matter what country they belonged to ; although Berwick was not yet thirty-six years old, he sent him the bâton of a Marshal of France, with orders to leave Montpellier at once for Spain. At the same time, touched by the grief which he saw in Madame de Roquelaure's fine eyes, the King sent her husband to command in Languedoc in place of Berwick, to the scandal of the whole country. The Count de Toulouse and Marshal de Cœuvres also went to Toulon to prepare a naval expedition, to assist in the siege of Barcelona. They trusted that the importance of the object would prevent Pontchartrain from treating them as he had done the previous year ; but they found out from experience that he cared less for the success of the siege than for carrying out his resolutions with regard to them.

About the middle of February the Queen-Dowager of England died in Portugal, whither she had retired as a childless widow. The King, her brother, was very fond of her,

¹ He was the illegitimate son of James II, by Arabella Churchill, sister of the great Duke of Marlborough.

and showed her much attention. The Earl of Feversham, brother to Marshals de Duras and De Lorge, was so intimate with her that it was generally believed that he married her in the interval between the death of Charles II and her departure from England. He had settled in England on account of his religion, and died there, leaving no children, but very rich by his marriage. The Queen-Dowager's death was announced to our King, and he went into mourning for her.

Bellesbat also died. His father's sister was that Madame de Choisy, mother of the Abbé de Choisy, who was so much in society and so well acquainted with all the intrigues of the Court ; and his maternal aunt was Madame de Bregny, whom I have had occasion to mention in a rather funny way. These two women had introduced Bellesbat to the Court and to society. He had the figure of an elephant and the intelligence of a bullock. He had grown to think that he was a courtier, and used to follow the King whenever he went on a campaign or to the frontiers, without being any further advanced for it. His forefathers had been men of the gown ; he himself belonged to neither the gown nor the sword, and was a good deal laughed at ; but sometimes he would say rather amusing though brutal things. He had done a great deal to the gardens of Bellesbat, near Fontainebleau, where the woods and water are admirable, and had impoverished himself there. His sister was the mother of Canillac, whom I shall often have occasion to mention.

Two men much given to quarrelling, though not very courageous, had a violent dispute at a ball at the Palais-Royal. The Duke of Orleans, who came on hearing the noise, took a high hand with them, and forced them to make up their dispute there and then, and they were both glad enough to do so. They were the Chevalier de Bouillon and d'Entragues, better known for his high play and for being first cousin to the Princess of Conti than for anything else. They both wished to marry Madame de Barbésieux. The scandal of this affair caused her to retire into a convent.

The Dowager-Duchess de Mortemart arranged a bold marriage in her family ; she selected for the Count de Rochechouart, her second son, the only daughter of her brother Blainville, who had been killed at Blenheim. The young lady was extremely rich, but her mother had been

shut up for a long time as a raving lunatic. This madness was in the family, and had shown itself in every generation. Her grandmother was the sister of Chateauneuf; their eldest brother had all his life run wild about the fields and the streets of Angoulême; their other brother, the Archbishop of Bourges, had never been quite right in his head; and she herself was worse still. The evil came from her mother, who was a Particelli, daughter of Emery, the Superintendent of Finance.

The Duke d'Uzès made a similar one. All his children by his first wife, the daughter of M. de Monaco, were dead; and he had ruined himself in low debauchery. He married a daughter of Bullion. Who could have supposed at the time that his wife's brother would be a Knight of the Order together with him in the promotion of 1724!

Du Bourg, a Lieutenant-General, and, later on, a Marshal of France, who was under orders for Alsace, where he commanded the cavalry, had recently caused a Captain of cavalry, named Boile, to be dismissed from the service. This officer lay in wait for him at Versailles on the evening of the 4th of March, attacked him as he was going to his rooms, and gave him two slight wounds. Saint-Sernein, who happened to be passing, separated them. The Captain took to his heels, leaving his hat, wig, and sword behind him. He was caught near Fontainebleau. Du Bourg threw himself at the King's feet to obtain his pardon, which the King, very properly, refused to grant. He was condemned to perpetual banishment, a sentence which the King commuted to ten years' imprisonment.

Old Joyeux, First *valet-de-chambre* to Monseigneur, and Governor of Meudon, died soon afterwards at Versailles, in extreme old age, leaving all his property, which was considerable, to the children of the late Bontems, his old friend and comrade. This Joyeux was a singular and very dangerous character; Monseigneur was careful how he treated him, and all the members of his intimate Court were on their guard with him. He had been in the service of the Queen-Mother, afterwards in the King's, and had a share in all the servile intrigues of his amours. In his youth he was handsome and well-made, and the best dancer in France; he had taken part in all the King's ballets, with the best dancers of the day. His back had remained quite flat, though he was bent almost double. His dress was singular.

and always the same : a great wig and large bands ; a very ample brown coat and very loose breeches ; but he was always neatly shod. He had plenty of intelligence, understood thoroughly the ways of the Court, and noticed everything. He was hot-tempered, obstinate, and could be spiteful ; but sometimes he took it into his head to be good-natured and render services. The King had placed him in Monseigneur's household as a man who could be trusted. It was not wise to displease him. Monseigneur did not dare refuse him the Governorship of Meudon, where he managed everything, as Bontems used to do at Marly in the early days. Monseigneur was kind to him, but was easily consoled for his loss. Joyeux had a good abbey, and I think some priories as well.

Dumont succeeded him in the governorship of Meudon. He was a gentleman of good family. My father, at that time First Gentleman of the Chamber, and First Equerry to Louis XIII, was the means of making the modest fortune of Dumont's father. Dumont was a tall, good-looking man of extremely little ability ; but, having been born and bred at Court, he had learnt its routine and the way to behave there. He was a very honourable man, and good-natured, but, like most dull people who have been spoiled by favour, whimsical and capricious. He was at all times in high favour with Monseigneur, and possessed his confidence ; he managed his private purse, and arranged his amusements, and he had the good sense to keep the favour of the King. With all this prosperity, he never forgot the services his father had received from mine ; he often spoke of them, and always tried to serve me in every possible way, taking pride in showing respect and friendship for me—a curious instance of which I shall relate further on.

He was unfortunate in his family. The Count de Brionne caused a scandal which forced Dumont to send his wife away to the country for the rest of her life. His only daughter was some consolation to him. She was a person of merit, and married a very rich man, whom one never saw, as he lived almost always in Normandy. He called himself M. de Flers ; his family name was Pellevé, well known in the times of sedition. When Monseigneur died, Dumont lost all he had ; but still retained the respect of everybody, and was well treated by the King. Under the

Regency he obtained a reversion of Meudon for Pellevé, his grandson, who was a man of merit, and much respected. Dumont, fortunately, did not live to see his catastrophe. He had fits of madness at intervals : it became impossible to leave Meudon in his hands, for he conducted himself in the most extraordinary way. His dismissal put the finishing touch to his madness ; he ended by drowning himself in the Seine, near the mill of Javelle.

One instance of madness leads me to mention another, so as not to interrupt the narrative of important affairs by leaving it to its proper place later on. I have already related that Maulevrier returned from Spain just at the time when Madame des Ursins was at the height of her triumph. The fellow made the most of his opportunities ; he was the bearer of letters from the Queen of Spain and Tessé ; he cultivated the acquaintance of Madame des Ursins, and took care to let her notice his private understanding with the Duchess of Burgundy, also the friendly way in which her husband treated him ; for he had managed, before his departure, to become known to the Duke of Burgundy, who found him intelligent. He had told Madame des Ursins so many important secrets when they met at Toulouse that she had no difficulty in believing that there was more going on behind the scenes than what she saw with her own eyes. Though she was leaving many friends behind her in France, she thought it important to secure the good-will of Maulevrier, for she saw that he had influence of a very private nature, and she believed it to be stronger than it really was. She had more than once had occasion to observe the force of such secret influences, which often govern Courts and decide important events. Maulevrier made use of her to gain admission to the private room of Madame de Maintenon, who was always anxious to obtain information about the internal affairs of the Court of Spain ; she hoped to rule that Court more than ever through Madame des Ursins, and could not refuse her request to be allowed to introduce Maulevrier. He was accordingly admitted to private conversations with her, which sometimes lasted more than three hours. Madame de Maintenon was always enchanted by new acquaintances ; she took a fancy to Maulevrier, and the King was pleased with what she reported of him.

Maulevrier, who had returned in disgrace, lost his head

when he saw himself so suddenly restored to favour ; he began to treat the Ministers with contempt, and to pay no attention to the advice which his father-in-law sent him. The affairs which passed through his hands, and a secret correspondence which he kept up with Spain, gave him frequent opportunities for private interviews with the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, separately ; and were a reason for the Duchess to treat him with consideration, and for him to become enterprising. He was very jealous of Nangis and the Abbé de Polignac. He aspired to all kinds of sacrifices on her part, and could obtain none. His wife was angry with him, and made advances to Nangis, and the latter responded to them, the better to conceal his own affairs. Maulevrier perceived it ; and it was too much for him. He knew his wife's spiteful disposition, and was afraid of her. So many violent emotions turned his head.

He was in his rooms one day when the Maréchale de Cœuvres came to see him, apparently to make up some dispute. He shut his door in her face, barricaded it inside, and for a whole hour, during which she had the patience to listen to him, scolded her outrageously and called her all manner of names ; without allowing her to see him. From that time he hardly ever came near the Court, and lived at Paris. He often went out by himself at strange hours, hired a carriage, and had himself driven behind the Carthusian Monastery and to other retired places. There he alighted, advanced alone, whistled ; sometimes an old man, coming out of a corner, handed him a packet ; sometimes it was thrown to him out of a window ; on one occasion he picked up near a bench a box full of despatches. I heard of these mysterious goings on at the time, from persons whom, in his vanity and indiscretion, he allowed to witness them. Afterwards he would write to Madame de Maintenon and the Duchess of Burgundy, but towards the end only to the latter, by the hands of Madame Cantin. I know persons, the Duke de Lorge among them, to whom Maulevrier showed portions of the letters he received, and of his replies. Among others, he read one from Madame Cantin, in which she tried to quiet him with regard to the Duchess of Burgundy, assuring him, on her part, in the strongest and most direct terms, that he might always count upon her.

He made a last visit to Versailles, where he saw her in private, and quarrelled violently with her. He dined that day with Torcy, and was mad enough to tell the Abbé de Caumartin, who was there, all about his anger and the conversation he had just had. After this he went back to Paris, where his mind, distracted by love, jealousy, and ambition, gave way completely. It became necessary to send for physicians, and to prevent people from seeing him. Innumerable visions passed through his head. Sometimes, in furious delirium, he talked of nothing but Spain, the Duchess of Burgundy, and Nangis, whom he wished to kill. At other times he was full of remorse for his conduct to the Duke of Burgundy, to whom he had behaved so treacherously; and he made such singular reflections on this subject that people did not dare to listen, and left him alone. At other times, again, he became gentle, and detached from worldly things; full of thoughts which his early education for the Church had left in his mind. Then a confessor had to be sent for to comfort him, for he despaired of God's mercy. He thought himself very ill and at the point of death.

The world, however, even his nearest relations, were convinced that all this was a piece of acting. In hopes of putting an end to it, his friends told him that people thought him mad, and that in his own interest it was very important that he should show himself. This was the last straw; he became furious, for he saw that such an opinion of him was absolute ruin to all his ambitious hopes. He gave himself up to despair. Although most carefully watched by his wife, by a few very intimate friends, and by his servants, he contrived to give them the slip about eight in the morning of Good Friday, and, going into a passage behind his room, he opened the window and threw himself into the courtyard, where his skull was shattered on the pavement.

The Duchess of Burgundy heard the news that evening while attending the service of the *Tenebræ* with the King and Court. In public she showed no emotion, but in private she allowed her tears to flow. These tears may have arisen from pity; but a less charitable interpretation was put upon them. It was remarked that next day Madame Cantin went to Paris; the pretext was to see Madame de Maulevrier, but no one was taken in by it; it

was believed that there were important reasons for her journey.

The widow's grief did not deprive her of her judgement ; no one doubted that she took possession of her husband's papers before retiring to the convent where she spent her first year of mourning. As soon as Easter was over we were at Marly. Madame de Maintenon seemed unhappy and embarrassed ; and, contrary to her usual manner, severe with the Duchess of Burgundy. She had many long interviews with her in private, from which the Princess always came out in tears. It was not doubted that Madame de Maintenon had at last discovered what everybody else had known long ago. It was suspected that Maulevrier had revenged himself, towards the end, by sending her certain documents ; some people even suppose that Desmarets, his cousin, who had been consulted by him about his domestic matters, had got hold of important papers, and sent them, through Chamillart, to Madame de Maintenon and the King himself. I had always been on intimate terms with Desmarets, like my father before me, as I have already mentioned ; and I could ask him anything. One day, when we had been dining with Chamillart, as we were walking in the gardens at Marly, I asked him to tell me the truth about this matter. He confessed that Maulevrier had often talked to him about his visions and his love ; in such a way that, seeing it was impossible to bring him to reason, and feeling sure the affair would end badly, he had prevented him from ever mentioning the subject again. He told me that the seals had been affixed in Maulevrier's house by his orders. He did not doubt that it contained many very curious papers and letters ; but he knew that, shortly before his death, Maulevrier had burnt many of them with his own hand ; he had wished to entrust others to his care, but he had refused to take them. As for the rest, he had no doubt Madame de Maulevrier had laid her hands on everything she could find. Desmarets assured me that he had received no order, direct or indirect, for acting as he had done : and also that he had discovered nothing of importance.

I was very glad to be assured of this important fact. As it could do no harm to Desmarets, I related this conversation to the Duchess de Villeroy, Madame de Nogaret, and other ladies of the Duchess's household, who had kept

Madame de Saint-Simon and myself well informed of all that was going on. Madame de Nogaret had begged me very urgently to find out how much Desmarets knew, and from her joy at what I told her I suspected that she had not done so entirely on her own account, but that the Duchess of Burgundy had been very uneasy in her mind. During this time the profound sadness and red eyes of the Duchess began to disquiet the Duke of Burgundy, and he was very nearly finding out more than was desirable. But love is credulous, and he was satisfied with the explanations given him. Madame de Maintenon left off scolding, to a certain extent at any rate; and the Princess realised that she must appear more cheerful. We were doubtful for a long time as to whether the King knew about the affair or not. I took the liberty of talking it over fully with the Duke de Beauvilliers; he suffered cruelly on account of the Duke of Burgundy, and lived in terror lest he should have the horrible shock of discovering what can seldom remain concealed for long. M. de Beauvilliers had never had any regard for Maulevrier. As a Christian, he was sorry for his wretched end; nevertheless, he felt that it was a relief. Tessé also, for other reasons, was greatly relieved when he heard in Spain that he was delivered from his embarrassing son-in-law; indeed, he took too little trouble to conceal his pleasure.

I may as well make an end of this delicate subject. The Abbé de Polignac was always being urged by Torcy to leave for Rome; but could not make up his mind to start, although Maulevrier's adventure, which had the effect of drawing all eyes on himself, ought to have warned him that it was time to go. At last, however, he had to take his leave. It was noticed that the Duchess of Burgundy's manner when she wished him a good journey was very different from that in which she often bade farewell to those who came for their parting audience. Few people put any faith in a headache which kept her on a sofa for the rest of the day in Madame de Maintenon's room, with darkened windows, and which ended in floods of tears. For the first time she was not spared. As Madame was walking in the gardens of Versailles a few days later, she found, scribbled on some balustrades and pedestals, two verses as insolent as they were intelligible: and Madame had not the kindness and discretion to hold her tongue. But the Duchess

of Burgundy was generally beloved. These verses did not cause much scandal, for every one tried to hush it up.

Prince Emmanuel, brother of the Duke d'Elbœuf, who had played many different parts in his time, most of them very disgraceful, and had received much money and protection from the King, had gone to Milan to see his sister and Vaudemont, his brother-in-law. While there, he concluded a bargain with the Emperor, deserted to his service, and was given the command of a regiment. The King, who was much annoyed, had him tried in his absence, as the Prince d'Auvergne had been; and he received the same sentence: to be hanged in effigy.

Langallerie also went over to the Emperor. His father, a Lieutenant-General of distinction, had been killed at Fleurus. The son was brave, zealous, and a good officer; he had risen rapidly to the rank of Lieutenant-General, and had always appeared sensible and modest. He was serving in Italy: I do not know what turned his head, but he was seized with a fit of ambition. He was annoyed at some reproof he received from the Court about pillaging, while he saw it carried on to a much greater extent by others, to whom nothing was said because they had more powerful friends. He was by birth no more than a gentleman of very moderate family, and he was very dull-witted. He went off to Vienna while the armies were in winter-quarters; and the Emperor gave him the same rank in his army that he held in ours.

These two deserted in March. A fortnight later the Chevalier de Bonneval did the same thing. He was a cadet of very good family; a man of considerable military talent and highly cultivated mind, plausible and eloquent; a great beggar and a great spendthrift; extremely debauched; a swindler devoid of honour or conscience, and much given to pillaging.¹ He had been a great thorn in the side of those petty Italian Princes whom we were by way of treating with consideration—to very little purpose, as it appeared afterwards. He had also laid hands on a good deal of money out of the contributions; the complaints of the Princes and treasurers reached Chamillart, who wanted to make him disgorge. He commanded a regiment of

¹ He seems to have been rather an amusing rascal; there is an interesting article on his chequered career by Sainte-Beuve. ("Causeries du Lundi," vol. v.).

infantry ; an order came to stop everything he drew from it till means could be found to make him pay the balance. Anger and poverty drove him to make a bargain with the enemy. Like Langallerie he went off to Vienna, where he became a favourite with Prince Eugène, and rose to the highest ranks. We shall see that Prince Eugène had afterwards some reason to repent of his kindness to him. Both Bonneval and Langallerie served against us under Prince Eugène in the campaign which was just opening in Italy. They also were hanged in effigy.

The projects for the campaign were worthy of the King's most prosperous years, and of those happy times when men and money were in abundance, and we had Ministers and Generals capable of dictating to Europe. The King wished to open it with two battles, one in Italy and one in Flanders ; to anticipate the assembly of the Imperial army on the Rhine, and overthrow the enemy's lines in that quarter ; and to form the sieges of Barcelona and Turin. The complete exhaustion of Spain, and that of France, which was hardly less, did not give much hope that such vast designs could be carried out. Chamillart, worn out by the burden of two offices which had formerly been held by Louvois and Colbert, was not quite the equal of those great Ministers ; nor did our Generals much resemble M. le Prince, M. de Turenne, or the commanders formed in their school. They were mere fancy Generals, chosen by favour ; as with his Ministers, the King thought he could confer ability on them with their patent of appointment.

Louvois had found the great Generals of the earlier part of the reign difficult to deal with, and had taken care not to form others like them. Before his power was at its height, it had been the custom to seek out young men of talent and merit ; they were entrusted with small detached commands to see what they could do, and if they did well they were pushed on. Care was taken to find out the nature of their mistakes. Those caused by incapacity or negligence were never forgiven ; but if they arose from too much impetuosity, or from surprise, the saying of M. de Turenne was not forgotten : that no one can become a good General without having been beaten, and learned to profit by his own mistakes. But it was only detachments that were entrusted to these novices at first, not whole armies ; more important commands were given to them by degrees, according as they

showed merit. In this way zeal and emulation were stimulated in every rank, and a good reserve was formed of capable officers ; for every one looked forward to having some opportunity for distinguishing himself. A battalion commander in those days knew more about his profession than our modern Lieutenant-Generals. I have often heard Marshal de Lorge discuss this question, and deplore the misfortunes which he foresaw would arise from the change of system.

Louvois, in order to get more power into his own hands, persuaded the King to adopt the system of promotion by seniority, which put everybody on the same level. Under it zeal and industry counted for nothing ; with the exception of a very few persons, whom Louvois pushed on for reasons of his own, no one could obtain advancement except by long service and seniority. Moreover, M. de Louvois made the King believe that he could command his armies from his cabinet, a piece of flattery which in reality tended to place all authority in Louvois' own hands. The Generals found that they were continually hampered by orders from the Court ; very often they were unable to turn a favourable opportunity to account, because it was necessary to despatch a courier ; and before the answer came the chance had vanished. The Commanders were badly served by their Generals of division, who had all risen by seniority, and had never been placed in positions of responsibility ; and the great majority of officers, knowing that they were certain of promotion when their turn came, never took the trouble to learn anything. A *maréchal-de-camp* taken from the infantry knew nothing about providing forage ; if he came from the cavalry he was equally ignorant of the art of making entrenchments, or anything connected with the attack or defence of places ; hardly any knew how to place outlying pickets, escort a convoy, or command a detached party.

Luxury had corrupted our armies, where every one wanted to live as delicately as at Paris : this prevented the Generals from living with the officers and getting to know them ; consequently they were unable to pick out the right man for any undertaking requiring judgement and capacity. Formerly matters connected with their profession were the chief topic of conversation among officers ; the young men listened to their seniors, who related their experiences, and

explained their reasons for approving or censuring what they had seen. Nowadays officers of all ages, being unable to discuss matters they know nothing about, talk of nothing but women and gambling. The General officers live together, and try to save money ; the Commander-in-Chief is always surrounded by a crowd, and when he is in private his time is entirely taken up in writing despatches and sending off couriers, very expensive and for the most part very useless.

On the 11th of March M. de Vendôme had a long interview with the King at Versailles : after which he started for Italy. Before leaving he asked to be allowed to command any Marshal of France who might be sent to Italy, and the King, who wished him to fight a battle as soon as he arrived and reckoned on him to cover the siege of Turin, was unwilling to send him away discontented, and granted his request. Chamillart had orders to write him a simple note, which the King countersigned, stating that, in consideration of his great services in Italy, any Marshal of France who might be sent to that country would have instructions to obey him ; this privilege to apply to Italy only. Vendôme was satisfied for the present, but he went away quite determined not to desist from his pretensions till he was allowed to command all the Marshals of France, without a patent, by virtue of his birth alone.

On arriving he found his army in good order, and, as Prince Eugène had not yet assumed the command of his forces, he determined to take advantage of his absence. On the 19th of April he marched to Montechiaro, which the enemy had been fortifying all the winter, but which they nevertheless abandoned. Vendôme, following close upon them, found them in position on the heights of Calcinato, and at once attacked them vigorously. Our forces were greatly superior in number, and the enemy was completely defeated, losing 3,000 men killed, 10 guns, and 8,000 prisoners. Vendôme's loss was very slight ; it was more a rout than a battle. On the 22nd he pushed on, to profit by his victory, but could make no impression on the rear-guard of the enemy. Prince Eugène had joined his army the day after the battle and promptly restored order. The reason of his delay was that he never would leave Vienna till he had seen the recruits, reinforcements, and money which he had asked for, well on their way to Italy. These succours came up a very

few days after his arrival, and he made only too good use of them : M. de Vendôme, far from being able to attack him, was forced to remain on the defensive during the rest of his stay in Italy.

Before leaving the subject of Italy I must mention a request which Cardinal de Medici made to the King. The Grand-Duke, his brother, was growing old, and had long been separated from his wife, who lived in France. The only issue of this marriage had been two sons : the elder was dead, leaving no issue ; the younger had quarrelled with his wife, who had no children, and had gone to live in Germany. There was no other posterity of the Grand-Ducal branch of the Medici. The Cardinal had never taken Orders and, though he was old, he determined to resign his Hat, and marry, in order to prevent the extinction of his House if possible. He wrote to the King to say that he wished for a French bride of his choosing. The King, as we have often had occasion to notice, had always been fond of the Grand Equerry ; he remembered that he had prevented a marriage between Mademoiselle d'Armagnac and the Count de Toulouse, and had been very angry with Madame d'Armagnac for a long time on account of that affair. He had not the same reasons for objecting to a connection with Tuscany as he had in the case of the Duke of Mantua ; he therefore thought to make amends to the Grand Equerry by a marriage for his daughter which might make her Grand-Duchess of Tuscany. He spoke to him about it ; the Grand Equerry was delighted, but asked permission to consult his daughter.

Mademoiselle d'Armagnac had lived at Court since her childhood, in a house which was always frequented by the most brilliant society. She was passionately fond of play, and high play went on there night and day ; and she was still extremely beautiful. She could not make up her mind to exchange this agreeable life for a foreign country, with an old husband who would leave her little freedom, and a position in which she would see nobody except at formal audiences. Her mother, who could not bear to part with her, did not attempt to put any constraint on her ; and her father, when he had ascertained her feelings, took her part. He paid his court by telling the King that his daughter preferred the honour of being his subject, and living at his Court, to the greatest fortune in a foreign country.

The King was much pleased ; but he had no other lady to offer to Cardinal de Medici, who at last married a Guastalla. He made her very happy, but they had no children.

Marchin had suggested that it might be possible to force the enemy's lines near the Rhine before the Imperialists had assembled their army. The design was approved, and successfully carried out by himself and Marshal Villars. At their approach the enemy abandoned their lines of the Mutter, and recrossed the Rhine, only a skirmish taking place with their rear-guard. This easy and successful stroke had the effect of relieving Fort Louis ; the garrison was reinforced, supplies sent in, and the surrounding posts which had been covering the blockade were taken. Villars occupied Lauterbourg, and Péri took Hagenau, with 2,000 prisoners, 60 guns, and an immense quantity of powder and flour, all destined for the siege of Phalsbourg.

The King of Spain arrived before Barcelona on the 3rd of April, and the trenches were opened a few days later. The Duke de Noailles, who was serving as *maréchal-de-camp*, fell ill with small-pox ; but the disease ran a favourable course, and it had the effect of curing him of his other ailments. Laparat, our best engineer since Vauban had become a Marshal, was in charge of the siege ; but was killed on the 15th of April. It is said that he made a great mistake in attacking the Monjuich first : a separate fortress which must fall if the town is taken, whereas its capture does not bring about the fall of the place. However that may be, the siege of the Monjuich lasted twice as long as had been anticipated ; much ammunition was consumed over it, and it cost many lives. The besieging army was not strong enough, the troops were worn out by fatigue ; our convoys were continually attacked by *miquelets*, who were so troublesome that it was not safe to go more than a hundred yards outside our camp. The garrison made vigorous sorties, in which the inhabitants joined ; the monks were all armed, and fought against us as if we had been Turks or heretics. On the 25th of April the garrison of the Monjuich abandoned that outwork, and retired into Barcelona without being molested. Soon afterwards the *miquelets* cut our communications so effectually that the besieging army was supplied only from the sea. The Count de Toulouse and Marshal de Crœuvres lay off the place with a small squadron.

During this time Chavagnac with four of the King's

ships devastated the islands of St. Kitts and Nevis in the West Indies, belonging to the English ; they destroyed all the forts, houses, and sugar factories, took away the principal inhabitants as hostages, and carried off 7,000 negroes and immense booty. On our side only one young officer and a few soldiers were killed.

About the beginning of May the Emperor placed the Electors of Cologne and Bavaria under the ban of the Empire with great solemnity, and no less violence and injustice, for the war concerned the House of Austria alone, and had nothing to do with the Empire. But Germany had been in subjection ever since the time of Charles V, and, though his successors in the Empire had not half his territories, they knew how to keep up the authority he had bequeathed to them. Although this ban of the Empire had been long anticipated, it produced a great effect, and, when the time came to negotiate for peace, it was an additional embarrassment to release these Princes from the ban.

Everything was ready in good time for the siege of Turin, the success of which the King had much at heart, owing to his anger with the Duke of Savoy. Chamillart, with more sense than people gave him credit for, saw the difficulties of the enterprise, and trembled for his son-in-law, who was to take command. He begged the King to consult Vauban again, and, since the King had formerly made the mistake of lending Vauban to the Duke of Savoy to fortify Turin, or rather, to perfect its defences, it seemed natural that he should be chosen to superintend the siege. He explained his plan of attack, made a list of all that he thought necessary, and offered, if he were furnished with what he asked, to take charge of the siege ; but of the siege operations only, for he confessed candidly that he knew nothing about commanding an army in the field. What he demanded as necessary for the siege turned out to be considerably more than it was possible to supply. Thereupon, he told the King decidedly that Turin could not be taken with less ; and yet, incredible as it may seem after the King's long experience of Vauban's skill, this commission, which he refused as impossible, was at once given, or rather, confirmed, to La Feuillade. What a contrast between these two men, and what reflections might be made upon it ! Can one refuse to acknowledge that when

God designs to punish a man He begins by blinding his eyes ! It is a truth which will be recognised frequently during the course of this war, but it was never more strikingly exemplified than on this occasion.

La Feuillade was therefore no longer a General with a minor command acquired by a series of factitious accidents : he was entrusted with an army on which the fate of Europe depended in a great measure, and on which all eyes were to be fixed. As the son-in-law of a powerful Minister, who controlled the Finances as well as the War department, it may be supposed that nothing was refused him which could possibly be granted, in order to enable him to make a conquest of such vital importance to the State, as well as to the private fortunes of the Minister and his family. Picked troops were sent to him so far as they could be spared, with a formidable train of artillery, and supplies in abundance. Everything was soon ready. La Feuillade arrived before Turin on the 13th of May, and the trenches were at once begun. Tardif, for want of a better, was his engineer-in-chief ; he had only had experience of a few small sieges in Bavaria. So this difficult task was entrusted to two novices who were very ignorant, and, for that reason, extremely obstinate. We will leave them for the present to establish themselves before Turin.

CHAPTER XX

1706

The King anxious for a victory in Flanders—Villeroy ordered to await reinforcements—He disobeys, and offers battle in a bad position—Defeat of Ramillies—Foolish conduct of Villeroy—He is deprived of his command—Vendôme appointed to succeed him—The Duke of Orleans to command in Italy under Villars—Failure at Barcelona—The King of Spain forced to retire to France—He re-enters Spain and arrives at Madrid—Return of Orry—He narrowly escapes the gallows—My relations with the Duke of Orleans—Important conversations with him—Mademoiselle de Séry—Experiments in magic

THE King began to feel the burden of the war, and was anxious to bring it to a close ; but he wished to grant peace, not to receive it as a favour. He urged Marshal de Villeroy most strenuously to lose no opportunity of beginning the campaign with a battle ; he hoped everything from his Generals and troops ; the opening successes in Italy and on the Rhine were encouraging ; and his friendship for Villeroy made him wish that he might gather some laurels. Villeroy started for Flanders about the middle of April, and from that time till his army was assembled the King never ceased to impress upon him the necessity of a battle.

Villeroy's dull, proud mind took offence at these reiterated orders. He fancied that the King doubted his courage ; he resolved to satisfy him at all hazards, and show him that such harsh suspicions were undeserved. But, though the King wished for a battle in Flanders, he wished it to be fought under such conditions as would make victory probable. As soon as the enemy's lines on the Rhine were captured and Fort Louis relieved, Marchin was ordered to march with eighteen battalions and forty squadrons to reinforce Villeroy in Flanders ; and the latter was expressly forbidden to do anything before Marchin had joined him. This prohibition was repeated by four successive couriers ; because Villeroy's letters showed that, in his annoyance at

being urged so strongly to fight, he intended to bring on a battle without waiting for reinforcements. I draw special attention to this point because it was the cause of the mortal quarrel between the Marshal and Chamillart; and the latter showed me all the letters written to the Marshal by the King and himself, together with Villeroy's replies. But this quarrel does not concern us at present.

Villeroy, therefore, pushed on, notwithstanding his orders to wait for Marchin. Marlborough's troops had not yet all joined him. Villeroy's army was the more numerous, and this gave him confidence; he made sure of success, and was determined not to share it with any one, not even with the Elector of Bavaria, who was the nominal Commander-in-Chief, but absent at Brussels. Without informing him of his design, he posted his army, on the morning of the 24th of May, in a position which the late M. de Luxembourg had noted as being a bad one. Villeroy knew this; but it was the destiny of France that he should forget it. He sent off a courier to announce that he was about to occupy this position. When the Duke of Orleans heard it he said publicly that Villeroy would be beaten; that M. de Luxembourg had told him on the ground that the position was bad for either attack or defence, giving his reasons; which the Duke explained very clearly. Unfortunately, it turned out that he was only too good a prophet.

Villeroy's centre occupied the village of Ramillies, his right resting on Taviere; between these two villages were posted the household troops and two other brigades of cavalry. In front of Ramillies were twenty-four guns, supported by twenty battalions of infantry, which were afterwards reinforced. The left wing was posted behind an almost impassable marsh. Just as these dispositions were being completed the Elector arrived from Brussels at full gallop. He had good reason to complain of having been kept in ignorance, and perhaps to find fault with the arrangements. But it was too late; all he could do was to make the best of it, which he did with a good grace and without showing ill-humour.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when the enemy's forces came under the fire of the guns at Ramillies: they had to halt for a short time till their own artillery was in position. After an hour's cannonade they attacked and

carried the village of Tavers, and then advanced their cavalry. Marlborough had perceived at once that the marsh in front of our left wing prevented any attack from that quarter; he withdrew his right wing in rear of his centre, where several lines were formed one behind the other; thus their cavalry was massed in front of our right wing, while half ours was uselessly posted in a position where it could do nothing. Gassion, who commanded our left wing, saw all the enemy's forces disappear from his front. This movement made him uneasy; but he had orders not to stir without further instructions. He sent several aides-de-camp in succession to ask for orders, but none came.

Guiscard, who commanded the right wing, seeing the enemy advancing, ordered the household cavalry to charge. They did so vigorously, and the red squadrons pierced in succession three lines of cavalry, which opened to let them through, and then attacked them in flank and rear. The Household Cavalry made several brilliant charges, and advanced more than five hundred paces; but, being attacked on all sides, they gave way at last. The same disaster happened to other troops on their left; their right was no longer covered by Tavers, which the enemy had captured, turning our own guns upon us; our cavalry had, therefore, to retire as best they might across a small marsh, and none of them would have escaped but for a handful of infantry who covered their retreat.

The disorder which resulted from this cavalry action was the cause of serious inconvenience, and gave rise to unpleasant criticisms. All that could be rallied of the Household Cavalry was drawn up behind the village of Ramillies. The fire was tremendous. Our troops penetrated into the midst of the enemy, but were driven back by superior numbers, and the village was lost, with all the guns which had been placed there. The Duke de Guiche defended it stoutly for four hours at the head of the regiment of Guards, and greatly distinguished himself. The second line of cavalry on our right, composed chiefly of Bavarian and Walloon troops, flatly refused to charge to the assistance of our first line; and the whole of our left wing remained useless with their noses in the marsh. Our right was broken, the centre pierced, and the infantry, almost all of whom had been engaged, much discouraged.

The Elector showed himself everywhere with great valour ; Marshal de Villeroy ran about distracted, not knowing how to remedy these successive disasters. He showed courage, but that was all ; no one doubted that he was brave, but no one suspected him of being anything more.

Nothing was left for it but to retire. The retreat began in good order ; but night soon came on, and everything fell into confusion. The cavalry of the left wing, pressing on too fast, broke the infantry in their march, which lasted all night. The defile of Judoigne was so choked with baggage and guns that everything fell into the enemy's hands. At last the army arrived at Louvain ; but, though the pursuit was not very energetic, it was not considered safe to halt till the canal of Wilworde had been passed.

The loss of Brussels was the first consequence of this defeat ; and Antwerp, Mechlin, and Louvain soon afterwards took the oath of allegiance to the Archduke. It was only the beginning of the restoration of the Spanish Netherlands to the House of Austria. The battle which had such rapid and important results did not cost us 4,000 men,¹ but the army was completely dispersed. Nearly all the stragglers, however, returned before long and joined their corps. M. de Soubise lost one of his sons ; Lord Clare, *maréchal-de-camp* ; and Bar, Brigadier of cavalry, a man of singular merit and a great friend of mine, were killed. There were many persons of note made prisoners ; Marlborough treated them with great politeness, and allowed many of them to go free for three months on giving their parole.

The King heard of this disaster when he awoke on the 26th of May. People were astonished at the silliness of Marshal de Villerey, who wrote by the same courier to Dangeau, in high praise of his son, assuring him that the sword-wound he had received was of no consequence. He forgot everything else. I was at Versailles, and I never saw anything like the anxiety and consternation which prevailed there. The worst of it was that, while we had only heard the bare news of the defeat, no courier could get through for six days, and even the post was interrupted.

¹ Mr. Fortescue, in his "History of the British Army," puts the French loss at about 13,000 men ; they also lost 50 guns and 80 colours. The loss of the Allies was between 4,000 and 5,000 killed and wounded. The British troops were not much engaged in this battle.

The King himself had to ask people if they had any news, and nobody could tell him any. At last he decided to send Chamillart to Flanders to report on the condition of the army, the progress made by the enemy, and the result of a conference which he was to hold with the Elector and Marshal de Villeroy. On Sunday, the 30th of May, after working with the King, Chamillart got into a post-chaise about five o'clock, giving out that he was going to L'Étang, where I had dined with his wife and daughters; and immediately went off to Lille. The disappearance of the man who held the two departments of War and Finance, and who was responsible for giving the necessary orders in this disastrous conjuncture, caused no little surprise at Court.

The army was no less astonished to see him arrive. He found it in the neighbourhood of Courtray, where Marshal de Villeroy went to see him immediately; and it was at once perceived that there was a coldness between them. Next day the Minister went to see the Elector, and had an interview with him which lasted three hours, Villeroy being present for part of the time. Chamillart also had conversations with many Generals and other officers.

He returned to Versailles on the evening of the 4th of June, and went at once to see the King in Madame de Maintenon's room. We then heard that, after several hasty marches, the retreating army had reached Ghent, where the Elector proposed to make a stand and hold the line of the Scheldt. This was strongly opposed by Marshal de Villeroy; and though he was brought with great difficulty to refer the matter to a Council of War, he gave his opinion in favour of retreat with such emphasis that none of the other officers, with the exception of Count de la Mothe, ventured to contradict him. The Elector protested both publicly and privately against a decision so discouraging for the army, but he did not use his authority to prevent it; for he feared the Marshal's influence at our Court, on which he would now be more dependent than ever.

Ghent was therefore abandoned. The army retreated to Menin; and in this way, with the exception of Namur, Mons, and a few other places, the whole of the Spanish Netherlands and part of our own were given up. There never was so great a result from a battle where the losses were so small; the enemy was as much surprised as we were, and it was the more vexatious because every

day saw the return of a number of stragglers who had been given up as lost. But what the Marshal did lose completely was his head, and that caused the loss of all the rest. Nothing could reassure him ; he saw enemies on all sides, and thought he could find safety nowhere. His son, and Sousternon, in whom he placed such confidence, had guessed his design two days before the battle, and had implored him on their knees not to fight. He was in despair at the disastrous result of a plan conceived by himself alone, and carried out against the advice of the only persons who had divined it. Moreover, he was overwhelmed with remorse for not having awaited the arrival of Marchin and his reinforcements, contrary to his reiterated orders ; his head turned altogether, he would listen to no one, and his obstinacy was as fatal to the State after the battle as before it.

Though the King bore the misfortune with outward tranquillity, he felt it acutely. He was especially sensitive on the subject of his household troops, who were said not to have behaved well ; he complained rather sharply of their conduct, being alarmed for their good repute, and perhaps also for his own safety. Some soldiers, who were also courtiers, bore witness to their good behaviour ; but, though I am far from saying that the Body-guard were justly blamed, this testimony convinced nobody. The King however seized on it with avidity, and sent to the Guards to assure them that he had made inquiries and was satisfied with their conduct. The world was not altogether satisfied with this sort of reparation. Whatever may have happened in a battle so unskilfully managed, the household troops had always distinguished themselves before, and have done so brilliantly in every action in which they have been engaged since. They have earned for themselves a reputation which causes emulation throughout our army ; and our enemies, by their own confession, look upon them with a degree of jealousy and fear which covers them with glory.

The entire blame for this unfortunate reverse fell on Villeroy ; in the army the outcry against him was unanimous, and expressed without reserve. The King saw at last that fortune did not smile on his favourite. A General in the Emperor's army who had been guilty of similar disobedience would certainly have been sentenced by the Aulic Council to lose his head ; it was entirely Villeroy's own fault if he

did not retain the King's favour in a higher degree than ever. The King was sorry for him, and openly took his part ; he wrote to him with his own hand to tell him that he was too unlucky in war ; he advised him, and asked him, as a friend, to send in his resignation as Commander-in-Chief, promising that it should be given out that he was relieved of his office at his own urgent request ; he would always be grateful to him for a sacrifice which was rendered necessary by the present state of affairs, and which would be even more painful to himself than to the Marshal. He assured him that he would always look upon him with even more kindness than before, and ended by repeating that the affair should be arranged in such a way that no one should doubt that the Marshal had not only resigned of his own accord, but had forced him to accept his resignation. All this may seem incredible ; but Chamillart showed me the drafts of the King's letters to the Marshal, all written in the same affectionate style, in order to overcome his reluctance ; and, moreover, I heard the same thing from persons to whom the King, becoming angry at last at Villeroy's obstinacy, complained openly.

When the Marshal received the first letter in the King's hand he saw nothing but the astonishing favour shown him in his present situation, and his sense of this favour blinded him. The King had treated him as kindly as if he had been his own brother, and he imagined that he would never make up his mind to deprive him of his command against his will. He replied to the King, with many dutiful and grateful expressions, that he was neither sick nor wounded ; he had been unfortunate, but thought he had not failed in his duty, and he could not dishonour himself by resigning his post without any plausible excuse. The King was more grieved than irritated by this reply. He felt compassion for a man asked to resign so great a position in very painful circumstances ; he condescended to write again three or four times in the same affectionate manner, but still urging his resignation, and still receiving the same answer. To his last letter Villeroy wrote arrogantly that the King was his master, and could deprive him of his command if he pleased ; he would obey without a murmur, but he must not expect him to meet him half-way. When the King received this last answer he lost his temper, and gave up all hopes of bringing Villeroy to reason.

It had been quite decided, before the first letter was sent, to recall Villeroy ; and while this sort of affectionate negotiation was in progress the King had written to M. de Vendôme asking him to take command of the army in Flanders. It seemed to be Vendôme's destiny to repair the disasters caused by Marshal de Villeroy, or at least to be selected for that purpose. In spite of his self-confidence and obstinacy, he was beginning to feel the difficulties of his position in Italy. The arrival of Prince Eugène and his reinforcements after the combat of Calcinato had entirely changed the circumstances of the war ; Vendôme, from being victorious and enterprising, found himself reduced to the defensive. He looked upon the proposal that he should leave Italy as a deliverance. He foresaw the difficulties of the siege of Turin, and was delighted to escape from the pressure which would be brought upon him by Chamillart and his son-in-law. He was flattered at being called in to restore our affairs in Flanders, and at the same time felt no uneasiness as to his prospects there. Everything was looked upon as lost in that quarter ; if he could do nothing, the blame would fall on his predecessor, while any trifling success would be magnified into a prodigy. But he took care to make a merit of sacrificing his prospects ; in his present position of favour and influence it was not difficult to make the King believe that the sacrifice was a real one ; and he was extremely grateful to Vendôme.

While these resolutions were being carried out in the most profound secrecy, it became necessary to choose a General to succeed Vendôme in Italy. Chamillart, who was much troubled by the repeated reverses which had occurred during his administration, was alive to the stimulating effect to be produced upon a French army by the presence of a Prince of the Blood. He had already suggested the Prince of Conti for the command in Flanders ; but met with such strong opposition on the part of the King that he did not venture to propose him for Italy. He was afraid, with some reason, of the moroseness and ill-temper of M. le Duc ; he therefore suggested that the command should be given to the Duke of Orleans. The King had always been averse to putting members of his own family at the head of armies ; he was afraid of aggrandising them too much. Moreover, he feared the contrast between them and M. du Maine, whom he was forced to acknowledge, though it was ex-

tremely painful to him, to be unfit for such employment. But, driven by necessity, and overwhelmed by the calamitous position of affairs, he yielded to the advice of his favourite Minister, who had taken care to secure the assistance of Madame de Maintenon.

Neither the Duke of Orleans nor any of the Princes of the Blood had any thought of being called upon for service. They had long lost all hope of it; and nobody expected such a thing, when on the 22nd of June, at Marly, the King, after saying good-night to those who were in the room after supper, called back the Duke of Orleans, who was leaving with the rest, and kept him for a good quarter of an hour. I had been amusing myself that evening in the saloon, where this unaccustomed event caused a great stir all of a sudden. We were not kept long in the dark. The Duke of Orleans, after leaving the King, passed through the saloon on his way to Madame, came back a few minutes later, and then announced that he was to take command in Italy; that M. de Vendôme would await his arrival, and then go to Flanders to replace Marshal de Villeroy.

The same evening, at his *coucher*, the King, justly irritated as he was against Marshal de Villeroy, was so kind as to say that the Marshal had so urgently demanded his recall that he had been unable to refuse it. It was a last plank which the recollection of his old friendship caused him to throw to the Marshal, to save him from the shipwreck. He had the folly to reject it, and the result was his downfall. I will not speak of it now, in order not to interrupt the relation of more interesting matter. He was ordered to return at once; but the King afterwards changed his mind, and told him to remain in Flanders till M. de Vendôme's arrival. The enemy captured Ostend and Nieuport; whereupon Marshal Vauban was sent to Dunkirk to assume the command in that part of Maritime Flanders.

During the evening of the same day on which the King received the cruel news of the battle of Ramillies the Count de Toulouse arrived at Versailles from Toulon, where he had left Marshal de Cœuvres. They had remained at anchor before Barcelona till the 8th of May, when they heard of the approach of the enemy's fleet, consisting of more than forty-five ships of war. Thanks to the good offices of Pontchartrain, our Admiral was not strong enough to await their

arrival ; after a long conference with Tessé and Puységur, he weighed anchor and returned to Toulon.

The arrival of the hostile fleet and the departure of our own made a serious difference ; it gave fresh vigour to the besieged, and the besieging army found all sorts of fresh obstacles. Tessé, seeing the impossibility of continuing the siege, and the difficulty attending the retreat, persuaded the King of Spain to allow the Duke de Noailles to take part in the deliberations which were held on the subject. Noailles had only lately been made *maréchal-de-camp* ; he had not seen more than four campaigns, for his long illness had kept him at Court ; and, having been attacked by small-pox immediately on his arrival before Barcelona, he had been unable to serve during the siege, and knew very little of what had been going on ; but he was Madame de Maintenon's nephew, and as such would preserve Tessé from blame. All the difficulties of the situation were therefore discussed in his presence.

It was found that the engineers were so ignorant and slow that no confidence could be placed in them ; moreover, owing to the sale of commissions in the artillery, which the King had permitted some time ago, that branch of the service was in a bad state. It was not only that the officers who had purchased their rank knew nothing about their business, but time was wasted in shifting the guns from place to place, because every time they were moved the officers were entitled to a pecuniary allowance ; they even went so far as to place their batteries in bad positions in order that it might be necessary to shift them. The besieging army had for some time been fed only from the sea, and this resource was now cut off. All these considerations convinced the King of Spain, though much against his will, that it was necessary to raise the siege. The question was in which direction the retreat should be made. It was agreed unanimously that it was impossible to retire through Catalonia, on account of the swarms of insurgents who occupied that country and held all the strong places. It was decided to take the road of the French frontier, and to leave the consideration of future movements till the army had reached Roussillon in safety.

The siege was raised accordingly, on the night of the 10th of May ; our army had to abandon a hundred guns, and immense stores of powder, shells, working-tools, and pro-

visions. For a whole week its retreat was perpetually harassed by *miquelets*, who attacked it in flank and rear from the mountains. At last the Duke de Noailles decided to parley with them : he had some influence with them, because his father had treated them well and had saved the life of one of their principal leaders ; and his equipages had been respected by them throughout the siege. On hearing his name some of their chiefs came down from the mountains to see him : he got them to promise that they would not fire on our troops, on condition that their houses and property should not be burnt. This treaty was faithfully carried out on both sides ; and the remainder of the retreat, which lasted three days more, was unmolested by these cruel wasps. The army was worn out : it lost nearly all its stragglers and marauders ; and, including the siege, the total loss was over 4,000 men.

The question now arose as to the best line of conduct for the King of Spain. Some of his advisers thought he had better remain in France to await the issue of the present crisis ; some of them even suggested that he should go as far as Versailles. It was the Duke de Noailles, as he has told me himself (but I do not guarantee the truth of his story), who gave the King very different advice, which saved him. He maintained that a sinister interpretation would be put upon such a retirement into France ; not only by the King's enemies, but by the remnant of his party in Spain, who would look upon it as a cowardly abandonment of themselves ; his advice was that, no matter how feeble his resources were, the King should cross the mountains of the country of Foix to Fontarabia, rejoin the Queen at all hazards, show himself to his people, and try by every means in his power to arouse their zeal and appeal to their fidelity. This was the only conduct which held out any hope of success, considering the strenuous efforts which our enemies were making to establish themselves in every part of Spain, including the capital itself. Fortunately, this advice was taken. The army remained in Roussillon ; and the King of Spain, accompanied by the Duke de Noailles and escorted by two regiments of dragoons, went to Toulouse, and thence to Pau. In the meantime Brancas was despatched to the King to make a report, receive his orders, and carry them back to the King of Spain.

Brancas arrived at Versailles on the 28th of May. The

King had for some time been expecting the unfortunate news which he brought. He approved of the decision which had been taken, gave the King of Spain the troops who had returned from the siege, allowed Tessé to return, and appointed the Duke de Noailles to command in Roussillon. In this way the Duke de Noailles, who had not seen more than three or four campaigns at the outside, climbed rapidly up the ladder of promotion, by virtue of being the favourite nephew of Madame de Maintenon. It is true that as much had been done for Chamillart's beloved son-in-law, but La Feuillade was Noailles' senior by nearly twenty years. Tessé had the honour of giving a lift to both of them. We have seen already what he did for La Feuillade. On this occasion he was not at all anxious to return to Spain, where he thought all was lost. He preferred to leave the responsibility to the Duke of Berwick, who was on the spot, and knew too much to interfere with the Duke de Noailles in Roussillon. Tessé played the invalid, as he had done in Savoy and Italy; he went to the waters of Balarue for a few days, and then returned to Court.

From Pau the King of Spain went, not to Fontarabia, but to Pampeluna; and thence to Madrid, where he rejoined the Queen, who had remained there as Regent. A courier from the Duke de Noailles arrived at Versailles with the news that the King of Spain had entered his capital and had been enthusiastically received by his people. In the meantime Berwick, with a handful of troops, was hard pressed by the Portuguese army. He was forced to retreat continually, making a show of defending every pass and river, and retiring as slowly as possible; but all his skill could not prevent the Portuguese from advancing on Madrid. The Queen, accompanied by Amelot and all the members of the councils, left that town for Burgos on the 18th of June, while the King went to place himself at the head of Berwick's little army. The Portuguese immediately entered Madrid, which had been deserted by all persons of note; and the King and Berwick fell back on Burgos, where they were joined six weeks later by the French troops from Roussillon. During this extremity the Queen sent off all her jewels to Versailles, including that famous pear-shaped pearl known as the Peregrine, which in size, shape, and colour is incomparably the finest pearl ever seen.

The Spanish Bishops distinguished themselves by their

zeal in raising troops at their own expense, and sent the King very considerable sums besides. The Bishop of Murcia did more than any of them ; he had been a simple parish priest, distinguished for his virtue and zeal, and the King had rewarded him by giving him this bishopric. Cardinal Portocarrero also, though he had so many reasons to be dissatisfied, contributed largely, and continued to set an example of loyalty. The support of the prelates was very important to the King. They sent out a number of preachers, who went about the country exhorting the people, and stirring them up to show their fidelity.

Berwick, having been reinforced by the French troops, at once took the offensive, and the war assumed a new aspect. The people throughout Castille took up arms, and compelled the Archduke, who was on his way to take command of his army, to retrace his steps to Saragossa. The Portuguese were forced to retire from Madrid, to which place the King and Queen returned about the end of September, amid great demonstrations of joy. Madame des Ursins took the opportunity of clearing the palace of three hundred ladies who had refused to follow the Queen to Burgos, or whose relations were known to be attached to the Archduke. Such were the strange results of the badly planned siege of Barcelona ; its failure almost cost Philip his throne, which he regained almost as rapidly by his own courage, the skill and capacity of Berwick, the devotion of the Castilians, and the prompt succour he received from the King his grandfather. I must now return to less interesting affairs, which I have postponed so as not to interrupt the story of these important events.

The King soon filled up the vacancies caused by the battle of Ramillies. Contades, whom I shall have occasion to mention again, was made Major of the regiment of Guards. He was a gentleman of Anjou, whose father had become known to the King by sending him some handsome and well-trained pointers. He was a good-looking man, and his conversation was such as suited the Court and the ladies, who liked him very much. He was given to gallantry, which he often used as a means of pushing his fortune. The Duke de Guiche, to whom he attached himself, was the means of his obtaining this appointment, the duties of which he performed very nobly and well. He knew how to keep his place with everybody, and made himself agreeable to

courtiers, and to his Generals, without offending any one ; he made his way honourably, and his society was much sought after in the most brilliant circles of the Court and of the camps ; he contrived to keep his position in spite of all changes, and was treated with confidence by his commanders ; yet, strange to say, he was far from clever and never could do so much as write a letter.

Several deaths occurred about this time, among others that of an old Mademoiselle de Foix, paternal aunt of the Duke de Foix, very rich and very clever ; at least I have heard M. de Lausun, who inherited part of her wealth, say so. She never would leave her estates, where she lived like a great lady, with haughty ways which were forgiven in her case on account of her age, and because people were accustomed to them, but which would be quite out of place nowadays.

The King gave judgement in the Council of Despatches with regard to two rather singular disputes. The first, which M. le Prince had much at heart, was between himself and the Parliament of Dijon. The Parliament, coming to salute him on his arrival to preside over the meeting of the Estates of Burgundy, made their ushers enter M. le Prince's house with their wands erect, whereas M. le Prince claimed that, as he was the King's representative, they ought to be lowered. It was so decided, to the great mortification of the Parliament.

There seemed to be no difficulty whatever about the other matter. Merinville had been forced by the bad state of his affairs to sell his property of Rieux to Samuel Bernard, the richest and most famous banker in Europe. This property is one of the baronies of the Estates of Languedoc. The Estates would not allow Bernard to sit in their assembly because he was not noble by birth, and consequently incapable of enjoying the rights belonging to the property which he had purchased. Thereupon Merinville claimed that the barony was of a personal nature, and that he could still sit in the Estates of Languedoc though he had parted with his land. It was decided that the right was inseparable from the property, and that Merinville had lost his quality of baron, though it did not pass to the purchaser, who was personally disqualified. Merinville's son has since bought back the property from Bernard's children, who received a judicial order to sell it at the original price, much against their will.

The King was so well satisfied with Marlborough's treatment of his prisoners that, at his request, Vanbauze, who was imprisoned at Reims, was allowed to go to his home at Orange for three months. The King was reluctant to consent to this, for he was much displeased with Vanbauze's conduct and language; and he made Marlborough feel that he was doing him a great favour. At the same time Verbaum, principal engineer to the King of Spain, was consigned to the citadel of Valenciennes, just as he was on the point of deserting to the enemy. Many sellers of contraband salt were also arrested in different parts of the country; they marched about in armed troops, and found much popular sympathy with their contraband trade. Many of them were transported to the West Indies.

Soon after the arrival of Vaset at Versailles, in charge of the Spanish jewels, Orry also arrived there to beg for pecuniary assistance in the desperate condition of Spanish affairs. He had a long interview with the King on the 15th of July; but during his stay, which lasted six weeks, Amelot and the Duke of Berwick wrote that the outcry against him in Spain was so loud and general that it was not advisable that he should return. In fact, his insolence and harshness, and his habit of telling lies on all occasions, had made him so odious that no one would do business with him. He was so shameless that the Duke of Berwick has told me that things which he promised for the next day, or even for two hours later, were never performed, and he afterwards denied his promises; so that at last Berwick always brought him his requests in writing, and made him write and sign his reply on the same paper. Even then he did not keep his word. When he was shown his promise in writing, he would turn the matter off as a joke; saying that he had been unable to resist the importunity of the Marshal, but had never expected to be able to carry out his promise. With this conduct everything was going to ruin, except his own purse.

When it was decided that he should not return, it became necessary to make him account for a sum of 2,000,000 livres which he had received for the payment of the troops in Spain. His explanations were such that the King determined that he should be hanged, and he was within an ace of it. But Madame de Maintenon, feeling that such a catastrophe would injure the credit of Madame des Ursins, who had always protected Orry, contrived to save him; and

later on, still for the sake of Madame des Ursins, she obtained for Orry the office of *président-à-mortier* in the Parliament of Metz, which he never exercised because he knew absolutely nothing about law or jurisprudence. It was a bold stroke of Amelot's to prevent Orry's return. But he was respected and beloved in Spain, while Orry was detested; so that Madame des Ursins dared not give vent to her anger on this occasion. Both Amelot and Berwick were necessary to her at that time; and she continued to live on good terms with them, content with having preserved her own reputation by saving her friend from the gallows.

As soon as the King of Spain re-entered Madrid, he thought it advisable to get rid of the Queen-Dowager, whose sympathies were naturally with the Archduke, and whose conduct had been very suspicious. She was sent out of the country to Pau; but afterwards, at her own request, Bayonne was assigned as her place of residence. She lived there for more than thirty years. I shall have occasion to mention her again.

Fontainemartel, First Equerry to the Duchess of Orleans, was dead; and the Duchess, who was still infatuated with the Saint-Pierres, did all she could to obtain the vacant appointment for the husband. The Duke of Orleans, for the sake of peace, gave it to him, but on condition that Saint-Pierre should never appear in his presence. Saint-Pierre and his wife were not people to be put off by this stipulation, degrading as it was. The appointment was a good one, and gave Saint-Pierre some sort of position; he accepted it greedily, and nevertheless continued to talk about the Duke of Orleans in the most unbecoming way. After this, his great ambition was to have his wife asked to Marly, and consequently admitted to the royal carriages and table. He employed every kind of intrigue to attain this object; and the Duchess of Orleans made it a point of honour to secure it for him, as a member of her household. She quoted the precedent of Madame de Fontainemartel, who had been admitted without difficulty. But the King refused flatly, and never changed his mind, though they continued their importunities nearly to the end of his life. He said that if the Duchess of Orleans had a man of Fontainemartel's quality as Equerry, he knew well enough that a servant of a Grandson of France was superior to one of a Prince of the Blood, but for such an Equerry as Saint-Pierre he was

astonished that they should think of such a thing, much less ask for it.

It is perhaps not yet time to describe the character of the Duke of Orleans, but I must explain on what footing I stood with him since we had renewed our acquaintance. He had a real friendship for me ; he trusted me thoroughly ; and I responded by the most sincere attachment. I saw him also every afternoon at Versailles, alone in his *entresol* ; if by any chance my visits became less frequent he reproached me, and he allowed me to talk to him with the greatest freedom. No topic of conversation escaped us ; he discussed them all freely, and he liked me to tell him everything that concerned himself.

I only saw him at Versailles and Marly—that is to say, at Court ; never at Paris, for besides that I rarely went there, and then only for a night or two on some business, the company he saw at Paris and the life he led there did not suit me. From the first I put myself on the footing of having nothing to do with any of the Palais-Royal people, nor with his pleasure parties, nor with his mistresses. Nor, on the other hand, did I wish to form any acquaintance with the Duchess ; I only saw her on occasions of ceremony, or when it was necessary to pay my respects ; and I never interfered with anything concerning their households. I thought any other line of conduct would only end in my being mixed up with all sorts of squabbles ; and I never would listen to a word on these subjects.

On the evening when his appointment to Italy was announced I followed him from the saloon to his own apartments, where we had a long talk together. He told me that Villars was to be relieved on the Rhine by Marchin, and was to command the army in Italy under himself. The nominal command was only given to him on the express condition that he should do nothing without the consent of the Marshal, and the King had made him promise to abide by it. He did not feel the irksomeness of this restriction so much as the joy of having at last attained to what he had always wished for, and had long given up as hopeless.

The Prince of Conti did not give way to envy, and behaved very well to the Duke of Orleans in the saloon in the evening. Madame la Duchesse, who was at cards, did not take the trouble to leave the table or go to the Duke ; she merely called out, as he passed her, that she congratulated him, with

an air of pique. M. le Duc had not yet returned from the assembly of the Estates of Burgundy.

During the next few days the Duke of Orleans wished me to talk over many things with him. I thought I could not do a greater service both to himself and the public than by telling him plainly that he was under a great obligation to Chamillart, and making him see that, whatever difference of rank there might be between them, a Minister was always to be reckoned with, and could, if he chose, annoy and injure the greatest Princes. I told him that, not to speak of gratitude, his own interests required a close union and perfect frankness between himself and Chamillart, and that he must be on his guard against rascals who might try, for their own purposes, to sow dissension between them; he could not doubt that Chamillart, whose upright and truthful character he knew, would do his best to serve him, after putting him at the head of a powerful army, when if he had chosen he might have left him in idleness. He listened with friendly attention to my counsels, explained his orders and instructions to me at great length, and told me to write to him often, and to speak freely about himself.

He had long been the lover of Mademoiselle de Séry. She was a young girl of good family, without any money, pretty and *piquante*, with a look of liveliness, caprice, and wit, which she did not belie. Her relation Madame de Ventadour had obtained for her the post of Maid of Honour to Madame; she became *enceinte* by the Duke of Orleans, and bore him a son. This scandal caused her dismissal. The Duke became more and more attached to her; she was imperious and made him feel it, but he only fell the deeper in love with her. She disposed of everything at the Palais-Royal; that procured her friends, who formed a little Court for her; even Madame de Ventadour, pious penitent as she was, did not break off relations with her. She had good advisers. She took advantage of this brilliant moment in the life of the Duke of Orleans to obtain the legitimation of her son, who under his father's Regency became Grand Prior of France, General of the galleys, and Grandee of Spain.

But Mademoiselle de Séry was not content with this. She felt that it was indecent to be called Mademoiselle when it was a matter of notoriety that she was a mother. There was no precedent for calling her Madame; that is an honour

reserved for Daughters of France, unmarried Duchesses, and unmarried Ladies-in-Waiting. This consideration did not stop her or her lover. He gave her the property of Argenton ; and prevailed on the King, though much against his will, to give her letters-patent allowing her to call herself Madame d'Argenton. The choice of the Duke of Orleans had been received with great applause by the town and Court ; this announcement damped it considerably, and caused a great scandal ; but a man in love thinks only of pleasing his mistress.

Everything in this affair was planned and concluded without a single word passing between us. I was annoyed that he should tarnish the brilliancy of his departure by such a notorious scandal, but that was all ; I kept to the resolution which I had formed when we first renewed our friendship, never to speak to him of his household, his domestic affairs, or his mistresses. He knew well enough that I should disapprove of what he was doing for this one, and took care not to say a word to me on the subject.

But one evening, just before his departure, as we were chatting by ourselves in a corner of the saloon at Marly, he told me a really remarkable thing which I cannot omit. He took great interest in all kinds of arts and sciences ; and, though extremely clever, he had always had that weakness for the supernatural which was so common at the Courts of the children of Henry II ; and which had been brought from Italy by Catherine de Medici, together with other Italian tastes. He had tried to raise the devil, without success, as he has often told me ; and also to pry into the future. The Séry had a little girl, about eight or nine years old, living with her, who had never left her house, and had all the ignorance and simplicity of her age. Among other rogues who professed occult powers, many of whom the Duke had seen in his life, one was introduced to him at his mistress's house who professed to be able to show in a glass of water anything that one wished to know. He required some young and innocent person to look into the glass, and this little girl was just what he wanted. They amused themselves, therefore, by asking what was going on in various distant places ; the man muttered something over the glass of water, and the little girl looked into it and described what she saw.

The Duke had been so often taken in that he determined

to try an experiment. He whispered to one of his servants to go to Madame de Nancré's house close by, to see who was there and what was going on, to note the position and furniture of her room, and to come back and tell him without saying a word to any one. The commission was executed without any one knowing what it was ; the little girl remaining in the room all the time. As soon as the servant came back and the Duke of Orleans had heard what he had to say, he told the little girl to look in the glass and tell him what was going on in Madame de Nancré's room. She immediately repeated, word for word, what the servant had told the Duke. She described the position of the two card-tables, the appearance of the people sitting at them, or standing looking on ; in short, everything. The Duke immediately sent Nancré there, who returned saying that it was all exactly as the little girl had described it.

He hardly ever spoke to me about such things, because I took the liberty of making him ashamed of himself. I scolded him well about this story, and said what I could to keep him from thinking about such conjuring tricks, especially at a time when his mind ought to be occupied with more important matters. " But that is not all," he said ; " I only told you that story to prepare you for another." Thereupon he told me that, encouraged by the result of this experiment, he had wished to know something of more importance, and had asked to see what would take place at the King's death ; but without seeking to know when it would happen, as that could not be shown in the glass. The little girl had never heard of Versailles, nor seen any one belonging to the Court except himself. She looked in the glass, and described what she saw at great length. The description she gave of the King's bedroom at Versailles and its furniture was perfectly accurate. She said she saw him lying in bed, with various persons standing round, whom she described. There was a little child with a blue ribbon carried by Madame de Ventadour, on seeing whom the little girl made an exclamation, because she had seen her at the house of Mademoiselle de Séry. From her description they recognised Madame de Maintenon, the singular figure of Fagon, the Duchess of Orleans, Madame la Duchesse, and the Princess of Conti. She cried out that she saw the Duke of Orleans ; and, in short, a number of *seigneurs* and servants.

The Duke of Orleans was surprised that she did not make them recognise Monseigneur, the Duke or Duchess of Burgundy, or the Duke of Berry ; he asked her if she did not see such and such persons, describing them. She said "No," and repeated those she did see. The Duke of Orleans could not understand it, any more than I could, and we tried vainly to think what could be the reason of it. It was explained by the event : all these four persons were at that time, in 1706, alive and well ; all four died before the King. It was the same with M. le Prince, M. le Duc, and the Princess of Conti, whom the little girl could not see, though she saw the children of the last two, M. du Maine with his children, and the Count de Toulouse.

Having completed this inquiry, the Duke of Orleans wished to see what he could become himself. This was not shown in the glass. The man offered, if he was not afraid, to show him his own image on the wall ; and, after he had gone through some mummeries for about a quarter of an hour, the figure of the Duke of Orleans appeared as if painted on the wall, as large as life, dressed as he then was, but wearing a closed crown on his head. The Duke, who looked at it most attentively, could not imagine what it was ; he had never seen one like it ; it was not the crown of France, England, or Spain, nor yet the Imperial Crown. It had only four circles, with nothing at the summit, and covered his head.

Commenting on the obscurity of this and the preceding vision, I took occasion to point out to him the vanity of inquiries of this sort ; they are deceits of the devil, which God permits in order to punish those who pry into forbidden things ; for, instead of receiving enlightenment and satisfaction, they find nothing but void and darkness. He was far indeed from thinking at that time that he could ever be Regent of France, which was perhaps what this singular crown foreshadowed for him.

All this took place in Paris, at the house of his mistress, in the presence of a small circle of their most familiar friends, the evening before he related it to me ; and I thought it so extraordinary that I have made room for it here ; not because I approve of what he did, but simply to put on record.

CHAPTER XXI

1706

Villars refuses to go to Italy—Marchin appointed—Siege of Turin—Blunders of La Feuillade—Vendôme allows the enemy to cross the Po—He departs for Flanders—Smart action on the Scheldt—Cadogan taken prisoner—Illness of the Duchess of Burgundy—The Duke of Orleans thwarted in Italy—Advance of the enemy—Battle of Turin—The Duke of Orleans severely wounded—His gallant behaviour—He wishes to retreat into Italy—Disobedience of his subordinates—Marchin killed—Quarrel between La Feuillade and Albergotti—Reception of the news at Paris—Justice done to the Duke of Orleans—His mistress and Madame Nançré go to visit him at Grenoble—Bad effect produced on the public—Médauid wins the battle of Castiglione—The King's displeasure with La Feuillade.

A CHANGE was made in the arrangements respecting the command of the army in Italy under the Duke of Orleans. Villars flatly refused it; he said the King was his master, and, if he thought fit, could deprive him of his command on the Rhine; but nothing should induce him to go to Italy. Any one but the fortunate Villars would have been disgraced irretrievably; but, in the present situation of affairs, nothing he could do was taken amiss. He was told to stay where he was, and Marchin received orders to go to Italy in his place. The King exacted the same promise from the Duke of Orleans to do nothing without Marchin's consent. On the 1st of July the Duke of Orleans left Paris, arrived at Lyons in three days, and went straight on to Italy.

The Duke of Savoy left Turin about the end of June, giving the command of the garrison to the Count de Thaun, who acquitted himself only too well. He took with him a body of 3,000 cavalry, and began darting about the country, thinking that La Feuillade would withdraw troops from the siege and follow him, in hopes of taking him prisoner; and it happened just as he expected. La Feuillade left only forty battalions before Turin, who underwent great fatigue, and the siege progressed slowly. After a time, La Feuillade grew tired of chasing the wind, and returned to the siege;

leaving Aubeterre to continue the pursuit. The Duke of Savoy then showed himself from time to time, hoping to delay the siege. He led a wretched, wandering life, and was very nearly caught more than once. Aubeterre fell upon his rear-guard and took several prisoners of note.

Thereupon La Feuillade, unwilling to leave the honours of his capture to another, again left the siege and started in pursuit, the Duke of Savoy all the time laughing at him, and evading him with consummate skill. This conduct of La Feuillade's harassed his cavalry, and threw double work on his infantry because of the numerous detachments which he withdrew from the besieging force. It was singularly foolish to run after a will-of-the-wisp in this manner at the expense of the capture of Turin, which was the main object of the campaign, especially as every hour was precious and Prince Eugène was rapidly approaching. These delays gave him the necessary time; and M. de Vendôme's negligence and indolence, which were greater than ever now that he was on the point of leaving the country, allowed him to cross the Po under his very eyes, and repeat the lesson formerly given him by M. de Staremberg.

Repeated couriers were sent from Court with orders to hurry on the siege; but the lost time could not be recovered, and Chamillart was obliged to write and tell his son-in-law what a bad effect was produced on the public mind by his running over mountains and valleys in pursuit of a phantom which always eluded him. No one dared say a word to La Feuillade; Dreux, his brother-in-law, ventured to remonstrate with him, and was so roughly treated that he never tried it again. He even quarrelled with Chamarande, who, presuming on his age and experience and their old friendship, gave him some cautious advice; Chamarande's wisdom and good temper prevented an open rupture, but the coolness between them was soon perceived. Poor Chamarande lost his son, killed at the head of the Queen's regiment, which he had himself commanded.

When the Duke of Orleans arrived La Feuillade gave him a magnificent reception, and took him to see all the siege-works. The Prince was not at all satisfied with what he saw. He thought the attack had been made on the wrong side, an opinion shared by Cattinat and Phélypeaux, who both knew Turin well, and by Vauban, who had fortified it. Moreover, he thought the works badly designed,

and was dissatisfied with the progress made. He spared La Feuillade's feelings as much as he could, but he did not think it right to sacrifice success for his sake. He therefore ordered a good many alterations : but, as soon as he was gone, La Feuillade gave counter-orders, and continued to carry out his own plans, without seeking advice from any one. He behaved so roughly and insolently that he was detested in his army ; his Generals and other officers contented themselves with obeying their orders to the letter, and would not take upon themselves to go a step beyond them even in the most urgent necessity. With such a commander, and the siege so badly planned, it did not seem likely that Turin would be taken. A few outworks were captured, and La Feuillade made the most of these petty successes. But our mines were so unsuccessful that La Feuillade himself complained of the engineers ; and the artillery was as badly served as at Barcelona, and for the same reasons.

The Duke of Orleans met Vendôme on the Mincio on the 17th of July, and conferred with him ; not by any means so fully as he wished. But the hero had just committed some irreparable blunders. He had allowed Prince Eugène to cross the Po almost under his eyes, and to seize all the boats we had on that river ; and they were much wanted for the purpose of making a bridge, in order to follow the enemy. He was therefore anxious to be gone, so that the blame for his mistakes might fall on his successor ; on the other hand, his pride made him await the arrival of Marchin, in order that he might have the pleasure of giving orders to a Marshal of France. In this situation he avoided meeting the Duke of Orleans as much as possible ; but he could not prevent the sharp eyes of the Prince from perceiving many things which he had suspected while still at a distance. At last Marchin arrived, and, having enjoyed his superiority over a Marshal, Vendôme at once took his departure.

Vendôme arrived at Versailles on the 31st of July, and was received as the hero who was to put everything to rights. He boasted of the good order in which he had left the army of Italy, and declared that Prince Eugène would never relieve Turin. On the 2nd of August the King gave him a letter, written by his own hand, directing all Marshals of France to take their orders from him and obey him everywhere. That was what he and M. du Maine had been working for,

against the King's own inclinations ; in this way, though his birth was not expressly mentioned, M. de Vendôme was placed in a position of perfect equality with the Princes of the Blood. Next day he left for Flanders ; and at the same time Villeroy was ordered to return. He did so without meeting M. de Vendôme.

His return this time was a great contrast to those of previous years. He arrived at Versailles on the 6th of August, and had a brief interview with the King, which passed off coldly. It was his quarter for duty as Captain of the Guard, but he obtained leave without difficulty to put off assuming the staff of office for a few days. He went off to Paris without seeing Chamillart, and completed the ruin of his affairs by making loud complaints against him. The time had gone by when he could make haughty airs and shaking his wig pass for arguments ; the favour which formerly sustained his emptiness had passed away. His clamour was listened to only by a few personal friends, more out of pity than because they still believed in him. It was not Chamillart's fault that he had disobeyed the reiterated orders which he received not to fight a battle before the arrival of Marchin, nor that he had taken up such a bad position, nor that he had subsequently abandoned the whole of Flanders in a panic. Nobody cared to offend Chamillart for the sake of a General who had fallen into disgrace through such blunders.

Villeroy, cast down from his former position, lost all his superficial brilliancy. Dejection and embarrassment took the place of haughty airs and sonorous words. He could hardly get through the remainder of his quarter on duty. The King never spoke to him, except to give him the parole and countersign. He felt himself in the way ; and felt it the more because every one perceived it. Instead of taking the lead in conversation he hardly dared open his mouth. His humiliation was marked on his face ; he was just like an old wrinkled bladder when all the wind which filled it has escaped. As soon as his quarter was over he went away, and hardly came near the Court till his turn for duty came on again next year. When he did come the King never said a word to him. Madame de Maintenon took pity on him, and he sometimes saw her when he came to Versailles ; this little distinction kept him from sinking into the ground altogether.

The army in Flanders was reinforced by a strong detachment from Villars' force on the Rhine. Marshal Villars was much displeased, for he was constantly complaining of the weakness of his army, while Prince Louis of Baden was receiving reinforcements every day. Nevertheless, he turned the enemy out of an island near Fort Louis, and established a bridge between the fort and the island. We lost about 200 men, including Streff, a *maréchal-de-camp*, who was much esteemed; the loss of the enemy was much greater.

M. de Vendôme heard that Marlborough projected a foraging expedition on a large scale round Tournai, and sent word to the Chevalier du Rosel, who was at that place. On the 16th of August a hostile force of 8,000 men took up a position along the Chin, a tributary of the Scheldt, and 1,200 cavalry crossed that stream. Du Rosel immediately sallied forth with nine squadrons of carbineers and eighty dragoons; and, avoiding the fire of the infantry, fell on the 1,200 horsemen, who were in scattered groups, and cut them up completely. Two hundred of them were killed, and 250 made prisoners. Among the prisoners was Cadogan, Marlborough's favourite General; Marlborough had advanced too far in person, and Cadogan, to protect his retreat, had made a stand, as long as he could, at the head of a bridge, with a handful of dragoons. M. de Vendôme at once sent Cadogan back to Marlborough on parole. Du Rosel's attack was brisk and well planned; but it was the only exploit of the new General. Far from setting things to rights in Flanders he was reduced to looking on helplessly while the enemies captured such places as suited them. They wound up by the siege of Ath, which surrendered on the 3rd of October, after holding out for three weeks, the garrison, which consisted of five battalions, becoming prisoners of war. Ten days later the armies in Flanders separated, and the campaign was over.

The King was looking forward to a visit to Fontainebleau. The Duchess of Burgundy was *enceinte*, and was to travel by boat. The doctors did not approve of her taking this journey, and the visit was equally displeasing to Chamillart, who was very short of money for the most necessary purposes, and grudged the expense of the move, which was always very considerable. Madame de Maintenon, being appealed to on both sides, resolved to put the King off, to delay the journey on various pretexts, and finally cause it

to be given up. After a time most well-informed people knew that the visit would not take place, but the King himself had no notion of it. The departure had been put off twice ; he was to start from Meudon ; he went from that place to inspect the new church of the Invalides at Paris, which he admired very much ; the Cardinal de Noailles officiated in it in his presence. After this he gave a dinner to the Duke of Burgundy, and then went to see the Sorbonne, where he was received by the Archbishop of Reims.

On the following day Clément, backed up by Fagon, told the King that the Duchess of Burgundy could not go to Fontainebleau without being exposed to most imminent risk. The King was much annoyed ; he wanted to argue the point, but the doctors, who had received their instructions, stood firm. At last he decided, with some vexation, that instead of going to Fontainebleau next day, he would return to Versailles ; that the Prince and Princess of Conti should go to Fontainebleau, and that he himself would go there later on for three weeks only. For some days he seemed vexed ; they let him console himself by looking forward to this short visit : but it was put off, and finally given up altogether, on the pretext that it was not worth while to go for so short a time. So Monseigneur was the only person who saw Fontainebleau this year, with his little Court ; the Duke of Berry paid him a visit there, and hunted. They did not venture to stay there long, and came back to the King.

The Duke of Orleans, having been left by M. de Vendôme to himself, or rather to the guardianship of Marshal de Marchin, which was worse, drew together the detached corps of his army, and with some difficulty prevailed on La Feuillade to send him a body of cavalry. Having reconnoitred the country for some days, he resolved to take up a position between Alessandria and Valence, in order to prevent the enemy from crossing the Tanaro. Prince Eugène could not penetrate to Turin without crossing the river at this point ; the position was strong for defence, and could not be attacked without considerable risk ; yet unless it was forced the relief of Turin must be abandoned. Unfortunately, Marchin could not be induced to consent to the Duke's proposal. I do not pretend to explain his reasons ; he gave none himself which had any appearance of plausibility. But La Feuillade was extremely anxious that the army

should fall back, to unite with his own; and Marchin thought of nothing but pleasing the son-in-law of the powerful Minister. Neither of them would see that to prevent the relief of Turin was all-important, even to the personal credit of this fatal son-in-law.

While the Prince and the Marshal were still arguing the point, a courier from Prince Eugène was captured by some of our scouting parties, with despatches for the Emperor; they were, of course, in cipher. The Prince could find no key to it among his own ciphers; and as Vaudemont declared that he had not got one, the despatches had to be sent to the King to be deciphered. The King found a key to the cipher, which he had forgotten to give the Duke of Orleans. The despatches, having been deciphered, were at once sent back; but, unfortunately, the courier did not arrive till the very evening of the battle of Turin. They contained a report from Prince Eugène to the Emperor, in which he said that if our army took up the position suggested by the Duke of Orleans it would be madness (that was the very word) to attack it, and extremely rash to attempt the passage of the Tanaro elsewhere; that he would be obliged in consequence to abandon the relief of Turin, for an attempt to force the crossing would only result in the ruin of the Imperial army. Such was the justification given to the Duke of Orleans by Prince Eugène in a most secret despatch, of which the King and his Minister saw the original, since it had to be sent to them to be deciphered. What must have been their regret that they should have thought it necessary to give leading-strings (and such wretched ones) to a Prince who stood in so little need of them!

Having failed to persuade Marchin to adopt his plan, the Duke of Orleans had to fall back on Turin, and effect a junction with the besieging army. He arrived there on the evening of the 28th of August. As La Feuillade had now two superior officers over him, it seemed as if he ought to become more tractable; but he was determined to have his own way in everything. He knew the Prince had been forbidden to do anything without Marchin's consent, and he soon acquired complete ascendancy over the latter. The common object was, of course, to take Turin; but the question of the best method gave rise to continual disputes. The Duke of Orleans was justly angry with La Feuillade for having countermanded all the changes he had made in the

siege operations, and insisted on their being carried out. The siege was making little progress; several outworks, the capture of which had cost many lives, had been retaken by the enemy. The Duke of Orleans made an inspection of all the siege-works, and was not at all satisfied. He found the lines badly planned, far too extensive, and very badly guarded.

In the meantime the Imperial army was advancing rapidly. The Duke wished to march against it and defend the line of the Doire, a very inferior position to that of the Tanaro, but nevertheless better than awaiting the enemy's attack in our badly constructed lines. Marchin was as obstinate as on the former occasion. He objected that if the siege were relaxed to allow our army to march against the enemy, it would be possible to throw a supply of powder into the place. It was known, indeed, that the garrison was short of powder, for several skins full of it had been discovered floating down the Po, which the enemy had thrown in, in hopes that they might arrive safely at Turin. Even supposing the enemy did succeed in throwing a little powder into the place, it would have been of no consequence; for, if the army of Prince Eugène were defeated, Turin must fall sooner or later. But it was impossible to convince Marchin.

The Duke of Orleans then tried to persuade him at any rate to fight in the open. He said our lines were much too extensive and the enemy was certain to break through somewhere, and our army would fight much better in the open, where it could manœuvre freely. Marchin agreed that he was right; but he said the army could not take the field unless it was reinforced by forty-six battalions under Albergotti, which were posted on the heights of the Capuchins; and that if they were withdrawn the enemy would be able to introduce supplies into the place. That was true, but the answer was the same as in the case of the powder: the quantity of supplies introduced could not be very considerable, and if Prince Eugène were defeated the place was sure to fall.

This dispute became so warm that Marchin consented to refer the decision to a Council of War, which was assembled accordingly. But the majority of the Generals, as may be supposed, took care to side with Marchin and La Feuillade. D'Estaing was the only one who ventured to speak his mind

freely, and the Duke of Orleans never forgot it. Albergotti, like a cunning Italian, foresaw the approaching storm, and did not attend the meeting; pleading, as an excuse, the remoteness of his post. All the others gave their votes servilely, so that this Council of War made matters worse than before.

The Duke of Orleans made a formal protest, declaring that, since he was not allowed to have his own way in anything, it was not right that he should be held responsible for the approaching disaster, and, sending for his post-chaise, he determined to leave the army. Afterwards, however, he yielded to the remonstrances of the Generals, and consented to remain; but he declared that he would have nothing to do with the command, and refused even to give out the parole and countersign. The real reason of La Feuillade's obstinacy was that he hoped Prince Eugène would not venture to attack our lines; if the enemy retreated, the capture of Turin would not be the consequence of any victory of the Duke of Orleans, but all the credit would be given to himself. This was his real object; and, pursuing it with the boiling impetuosity of youth, and supporting his opinion by plausible arguments, he subjugated Marchin and inflicted a deadly wound on France. Such was the position of affairs during the last three days of this disastrous siege. The Duke of Orleans wrote an accurate report of everything to the King, complaining bitterly of Marchin's conduct; he then gave it to the Marshal to read, and asked him to send it off by a courier; for, having resigned his command, he did not consider that he had a right to send one himself.

Before daybreak on the 7th, the day of the battle, the Duke of Orleans was aroused by news from one of our scouting parties that Prince Eugène was assaulting the castle of Pianezza, in order to cross the Doire at that place, evidently with the intention of attacking our main army. In spite of the resolution he had formed, the Prince instantly dressed and went to awake Marchin. He implored him to assemble the army and march out to meet the enemy, to profit by their surprise at this sudden attack, while they were in the act of crossing a difficult stream. He showed that there was ample time to carry out this plan. Saint-Nectaire, who had great military talents, came in at this moment and confirmed the news of the enemy's advance. He warmly supported the Prince's advice; but it was

written in the eternal decrees of Providence that France should be struck to the heart that very day.

Nothing could shake the Marshal's determination to remain within his lines; he refused to believe that the enemy would attack them, and advised the Duke of Orleans to go and lie down again. The Prince, thoroughly disgusted and angry, retired to his quarters, determined to interfere no more with people who would neither see nor hear. Before long it was evident to everybody that an attack was imminent, but he took no notice. D'Estaing and some other Generals persuaded him, however, to mount his horse, and he rode carelessly along our lines at a foot's-pace. The disputes of the last few days had transpired, and even the private soldiers knew what had passed at the Council of War. Old soldiers are often quite capable of judging the plans of their commanders; there were many present who remembered the brilliant conduct of the Duke of Orleans at Steinkirk and Neerwinden, and they were displeased at his refusal to remain in command. As he was riding along, a Piedmontese soldier called to him by name, and asked him if he would not draw his sword for them. That word had more influence with him than all the remonstrances of the Generals. He told the soldier that he could not refuse a request made in such a hearty way; and, laying aside his resentment, he thought only of helping Marchin and La Feuillade in spite of themselves.

But the enemy's advance had been so rapid that it was no longer possible to leave our lines. Marchin, seeing all his hopes cast down, lost his head completely; he looked like a man sentenced to death, and was incapable of giving any orders. There were great gaps in our lines, and the Duke of Orleans sent for Albergotti's forty-six battalions, which were useless on the heights where they were posted. But La Feuillade had forbidden Albergotti to move, and he refused to stir. In the meantime the Prince, to fill the intervals in his attenuated first line, had mingled dismounted cavalry with the infantry, and moved troops up from the second line; always under the impression that Albergotti's battalions would soon arrive. But La Feuillade had sent fresh orders that they were not to move; and when the Duke of Orleans sent word to some other troops to cross a small bridge and come to his assistance, La Feuillade, as if possessed by a devil, placed himself on the bridge and

stopped them. The disobedience was so great that, the Duke of Orleans having himself ordered the officer in command of a squadron of the regiment of Anjou to put it in motion, he refused; whereupon the Prince cut him across the face with his sword, and subsequently reported him to the King.

The attack, which began about ten o'clock in the morning, was sustained with incredible vigour, and was met, at first, by a stubborn defence. Langallerie, who had been of great service to Prince Eugène on the march, was the first to pierce our lines; Prince Eugène sent him prompt reinforcements, and before long the enemy had broken through in several places. Marchin was mortally wounded and taken prisoner. La Feuillade was rushing about, tearing his hair, and incapable of giving intelligible orders. The Duke of Orleans did everything; he behaved with coolness and intrepidity in the hottest fire, rallying his men, and leading them to the charge in person. He received two wounds; one, not very serious, in the haunch; the other, very painful and dangerous, in the wrist. After a time he was compelled by pain and loss of blood to have it dressed, but returned at once to where the fight was hottest.

But everything seemed to be against the French that day. Le Guerchois, with his brigade of marines, had repulsed three attacks of the enemy, driving them back with great slaughter, and spiking some of their guns. Seeing that a fourth attack was imminent, and that, owing to his losses, he would be outnumbered, he called on the next brigade to come up in line with his, and prevent him from being taken in flank. The officer commanding this brigade, whose name must be buried in oblivion, refused point-blank. After this all semblance of order was lost; there was nothing but flight, confusion, and dispersion. The most shocking part of it was that the officers, even Generals, with very few exceptions, thought more of saving their equipages and the money they had accumulated by plundering than of rallying their men; they only increased the disorder, and were worse than useless.

The Duke of Orleans, seeing that there was no hope of retrieving this disastrous day, turned his attention to saving as much as possible. He carried off his light artillery and ammunition, with everything that was in the advanced works of the siege; though the heavy guns had to be left

behind. Then, calling together as many Generals as he could, he told them that he proposed to retreat into Italy ; by doing so they would still be masters of Lombardy, in possession of a country abounding in supplies, while Prince Eugène's victorious army would be in a precarious position, cut off from its communications, and hemmed in between their own army and Savoy. This proposal was too bold for the dejected spirits of the Generals ; who, moreover, hoped that the disaster would at least enable them to return to France, and carry off their money in safety. La Feuillade, who had so many good reasons for keeping silence, began to declaim so loudly against the Prince's proposal that, weary of his effrontery, he told him to be quiet, and called on the others to speak. D'Estaing was again the only one who supported the Prince.

At last the Duke of Orleans said that neither time nor place was suitable for a longer discussion ; as his hands were no longer tied, he intended to have his own way ; and he gave orders to march to the bridge and retreat towards Italy. He was completely worn out in mind and body. After marching a short distance he got into his carriage, and crossed the Po by the bridge, hearing the Generals behind him complaining loudly of his decision, which deprived them of the return to France they were longing for. Their murmurs were carried to such a pitch by one of them in particular, that the Prince, putting his head out of the window, told him that, for all the good he was in war, he had better have stayed behind with his mistress, whom he named. This made them quieter.

But it was decreed that the spirit of blindness and insubordination should complete the ruin of our army, and save that of the allies. As they reached the other end of the bridge, d'Arennes, a General officer, galloped up and presented an officer to the Duke of Orleans. This officer reported that the road our army had to take was held by the enemy in force ; he named several of their regiments which he had seen, and said he thought he had recognised the Duke of Savoy in person. Notwithstanding the precision of this report the Prince doubted its truth, and sent out reconnoitring parties, giving orders in the meantime to proceed as before ; if the officer's report turned out to be true, there would be no difficulty in turning back. But the Generals were determined not to be taken into Italy. The road

towards our Alps was open and safe ; they sent all the baggage, supplies, and ammunition by that road, so that, after half a day's march, the Duke of Orleans was informed that, even if the road to Italy was free, retreat in that direction was impossible, as all the supplies had gone the other way. Enraged at such criminal disobedience, not to say treachery, and worn out by fatigue and the pain of his wound, he fell back in his carriage, and said they might go where they pleased ; he would take no further trouble.

It was known afterwards that the officer's report was entirely untrue ; there was nothing whatever to prevent a retreat into Italy ; and, to crown our misfortunes, two days later Médauid won a battle which would have left the Duke of Orleans master of the whole of Lombardy, and made the position of Prince Eugène precarious in the extreme. This news reached the Duke of Orleans at Oulx, in the midst of the Alps, where he had been forced to stop by his wound ; and it put the finishing touch to his grief and disappointment.

Saint-Léger, one of the first *valets-de-chambre* of the Duke of Orleans, arrived at Versailles on the 14th of September, bearing the cruel news of the battle of Turin ; he announced that Nancré would follow him with a more detailed despatch.

Prince Eugène's army was too much fatigued to harass our retreat, which was effected in good order, except that a great part of the baggage-train was plundered or lost among the mountains. It has since been stated, on good authority, that Prince Eugène had decided to retire if Le Guerchois had been able to sustain a fourth attack ; but, owing to the cowardice of the brigade which refused to come to his assistance, he was overpowered and taken prisoner. We also heard that only enough powder remained in Turin for four days' consumption ; so that nothing was wanting to the joy of the enemy and to our profound grief.

Marchin, after he was taken prisoner, inquired whether the Duke of Orleans was killed. He then addressed a packet to him containing the letter to the King, which had been entrusted to him to be forwarded ; after this he sent for a confessor and would hear nothing more of worldly affairs ; he died the same night. Among his papers were found all sorts of absurd trifles, and a great collection of the most extraordinary vows. He left his affairs in great disorder, and debts amounting to six times his property.

He was a very little man, extremely talkative, a thorough courtier, or rather a thorough flunkey; he thought of nothing but pushing his fortune, though by no means a dishonest man; he was servile in his manner, rather than polite; and too much given to paying compliments. His mind was futile and frivolous, with no solidity about it; he had little judgement or capacity, and understood nothing except the art of making himself pleasant to any one in a position to assist or injure him. He was not old, and had never been married.

During the retreat the army was in want of bread. The Duke of Orleans, though worn out in body and mind, was the only person who took any trouble about anything; no one was of the slightest assistance to him. He waited till the rearguard came up to see that they were supplied with bread, and then ordered Vibraye to march with a strong detachment to seize the fort of Bar, which commanded the road leading to Ivrea, the only pass by which it would be possible to return to Italy. La Feuillade, who was entrusted with the details, wished to accompany the detachment himself; he delayed it two days, and then forgot to take any bread, so that after the first day's march he had to halt and send back for it. In the meantime the enemy took possession of Bar, and, as it was impossible to dislodge them, La Feuillade had nothing for it but to return as he had come. It is impossible to describe the vexation of the Duke of Orleans, who was confined to his bed on account of his wounds, on hearing of the failure of this stroke through La Feuillade's negligence and procrastination.

When La Feuillade arrived at Oulx the Duke of Orleans was dangerously ill; the condition of his wounds had been made much worse by his exertions in providing supplies for his troops and making them fit for service; for his one object was to lead them back to Italy if possible. La Feuillade happened to be in his sick-room with Albergotti and some others, when the Prince, exasperated by the failure of the detachment, could not refrain from reproaching them both with their disobedience in refusing to bring Albergotti's corps to his assistance during the battle. Both attempted to reply, but the Duke of Orleans, feeling that he could not trust his temper to discuss the matter, requested them to say no more about it. Sassenage and a few other officers who were at the bedside got them to withdraw,

which they did, growling at each other, and raising their voices as they drew near the door.

They were still in the room when Albergotti told La Feuillade that the Prince's reproach was addressed to him alone, for he himself had only obeyed orders in not bringing up his troops; upon which La Feuillade replied flatly that it was untrue, and laid his hand on his sword. Albergotti, reddening with anger, muttered something and stepped back a couple of paces. Sassenage and the others interposed between them; and got them out of the room, asking them if they were mad and had forgotten where they were. The Duke of Orleans, behind his curtains, either did not hear, or paid no attention. The other officers separated them, but felt some alarm as to what might follow; but nothing more came of the dispute. Albergotti's courage was undoubted, but he was a cunning Italian, and had no intention of quarrelling with the favourite son-in-law of Chamillart. La Feuillade, though brave enough himself, was not sorry that his opponent behaved so good-naturedly. This affair was very discreditable to both. No one doubted their courage, for they had both proved it amply; but La Feuillade dishonoured himself by denying a fact which was known to the whole army, and Albergotti by swallowing so gross an affront without resenting it.

However, La Feuillade, in despair at the terrible consequences of his folly, despatched a courier to Chamillart, with the resignation of his government of Dauphiné, and told him that he felt himself unworthy of his esteem and of the King's favour. He obtained permission from the Duke of Orleans to go to Antibes, with the object of proceeding to Genoa, and serving under Médavid in Italy. But Chamillart, still infatuated with his son-in-law, took care not to hand in his resignation, and sent it back with an encouraging letter, which had the effect of calming La Feuillade to a certain extent. It was generally supposed that his despair was a clever piece of acting, to excite the compassion of the King and his father-in-law; and that he knew well enough that the King would never see his resignation unless Chamillart was certain that he would not accept it. At the same time the Duke of Orleans received despatches from the Court approving his plan of returning to Italy. He wished to stand well with Chamillart, and was content with having humiliated La Feuillade; though it must be confessed

that he was easily satisfied. He therefore sent a courier to La Feuillade telling him not to embark, but to return to Briançon ; whither he intended to go himself as soon as he could be moved.

It was at Briançon that Besons joined the Duke of Orleans. He was serving this year on the coast of Normandy, as his health would not allow him to go on more active service. The Prince, who knew him well, liked and esteemed him ; he asked the King for his assistance, and Besons, whose health was now restored, and who felt highly flattered at being remembered in this way, lost no time in joining him.

I had to spend a month at La Ferté. The Duke of Orleans kept me well supplied with news from Italy, and often wrote me letters with his own hand when he had private matters to tell me. I was therefore in a state of great anxiety, for I was in a position to foresee the impending disaster. One day a gentleman arrived from Rouen to visit his brother, who lived close by ; he came up to me as I was walking in the park with Madame de Saint-Simon and some friends, and gave us the news of the battle of Turin and Marchin's death, with many particulars of the conduct of the Duke of Orleans. It was not till three days later that the King received the same news by a courier, and I did not get my own letters for four days. We could not understand how the news could have reached this gentleman with such inconceivable rapidity, and he would not explain it ; he merely assured us that it was true. We never saw him again, for he died soon afterwards. I was much distressed that such a disaster should have happened to the army commanded by the Duke of Orleans, though he was in no way to blame for it. I was seized by a fever, and went off to Paris without stopping at Versailles, to avoid falling into the clutches of the doctors there.

Nancré arrived almost at the same time with the detailed report. I did not know him at all ; but I sent to ask him if he would be so kind as to come and see me, as I was not well enough to go to him. The Duke of Orleans had told him to see me ; he came at once, and we spent two good hours in conversation. He told me that the King did full justice to his nephew ; and begged me to write to him without any reserve. But there was no occasion to spare his feelings. Notwithstanding his defeat, the public assigned him the laurels of a conqueror ; and even the Court, in spite

of petty jealousies, was loud in his praises. This is a very singular and noteworthy fact; I do not know another instance in which a General has received such unanimous applause after so complete a disaster. All the blame was assigned to Marchin; and, in spite of Chamillart, to La Feuillade.

Our loss in this battle was not very heavy; there were not more than 1,500 men killed, but many wounded and prisoners. The Abbé de Grancey, First Almoner to the Duke of Orleans, not much of a priest, but a very brave and worthy man, was killed by his side; whereupon the Count de Roucy observed that the poor Abbé would die of joy if he could only know that he had been killed in battle. Among the prisoners was Murcé, who died of his wounds at Turin. He was the brother of Madame de Caylus, but as unfortunate in body and mind as she was charming. He was brave, and not a bad officer, but stupid and clumsy to the last degree. When he was quartered with us in Germany he had with him a young valet whom he called Marcassin, who used to laugh at him all day long. That was the year when the Duchess of Burgundy came to France. Murcé complained bitterly that three great misfortunes had befallen him: his horse Isabelle was dead; Marcassin had left him; and his wife was not a woman of honour—he meant that she had not been appointed one of the Ladies of Honour.

Marivault and Montgon used to draw him out. It was delightful to see him in their company: to watch traps they set for him, and the foolish way in which he invariably fell into them. He had married a daughter of General de Chaumont, and brought her with him to Strasbourg: she was wonderfully silly, ugly, and devout, so that this marriage spoilt only one household. She used to perform her devotions very often, and the night beforehand always insisted on sleeping alone; Murcé used to complain of it, and tell everybody about his wife's calendar. It may cause some surprise that I should chronicle such absurd trifles in connection with a man like Murcé, but I will explain why I do so. He was to Madame de Maintenon what La Feuillade was to Chamillart. She thought him a wonderful man; he used to report to her concerning things and persons in the army, and she consulted him as to what he thought had better be done. He often showed her letters; and they



The Royal Island in the Garden of Versailles.

revealed a confidence in him which made one feel quite sorry for her. He was feared and treated with caution, for he helped or injured a good many persons ; from this one may judge what sort of personage he was, and also form some notion of the character of Madame de Maintenon.

On the 9th of September, two days after the battle of Turin, Médavid marched with 9,000 men to the relief of Castiglione, which the hereditary Prince of Hesse-Cassel was besieging with 12,000. He had taken the town, in which he left 800 men, and marched to meet Médavid in a fine plain. Our cavalry fell at first into some disorder, which was increased by the flight of four Milanese and Neapolitan regiments of infantry ; but Médavid attacked so vigorously with the remainder that the enemy was completely defeated, losing 2,000 killed, 1,500 prisoners, all his guns and many standards. Castiglione was retaken, and its garrison made prisoners ; and Médavid pursued the Prince of Hesse beyond the Adige, inflicting great loss during the retreat. This action was a strange contrast to Turin ; and the news caused additional regret that our army should have retreated to France instead of Italy.

Prince Eugène and the Duke of Savoy wasted no time in rejoicing over their victory ; they proceeded to profit by it, and recaptured all the places we had occupied in Piedmont and Lombardy. Vaudemont and Médavid were forced to retire into Mantua, and were unable to prevent these consequences of the battle and of the mistakes which followed it. Our army, however, still consisted of ninety-five battalions of infantry and 9,000 cavalry, with six regiments of dismounted dragoons. The troops who had served in the siege were worn out, but those who came from Lombardy were in good condition. A large number of mules were collected for the Duke of Orleans in Provence and Languedoc, and supplies of money, horses, and tents sent to him.

As soon as Nanéré had rejoined the Duke of Orleans, who had been very ill from the effects of his wounds, the new Madame d'Argenton and Madame de Nanéré set off for Lyons with the greatest secrecy, and from thence went to hide themselves in an inn at Grenoble. This Madame de Nanéré was Nanéré's stepmother, and very intimate with him. The Duke of Orleans had not yet arrived at Grenoble ; while on his way thither he heard of the ladies' escapade, and was very angry about it ; he sent them word

to return at once, as he could not see them. But they had not travelled all the way from Paris to Grenoble to be sent back in that fashion ; so they waited for him. When he knew that his mistress was in the same town with him, his love overcame his austerity. About seven or eight o'clock in the evening, when the affairs of the day were over, he gave orders that no one was to be admitted ; and then the two females arrived by a back entrance, and supped with him and two or three familiar friends. This went on for five or six days, after which he sent them back to Paris.

This foolish journey caused a great scandal. The public murmured, being really sorry that he should have tarnished his glory in such a way ; the envious, among whom M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse distinguished themselves, were glad to find something to say against him. Although I had resolved never to speak to him about his mistresses, he had written to me so openly and freely, as soon as his wound allowed him to do so, that I thought I ought not to refrain from telling him what people were saying. Chamillart also wrote on behalf of the King, to tell him of the bad effect produced by the journey of these women, and advising him to send them away. This letter, as well as mine, only reached him after their departure, and he did not answer them.

Although very far from being restored to health, the Duke of Orleans paid frequent visits to his troops in their various quarters, and distributed a good deal of money among them with discretion. He was still bent on leading his army into Italy ; and sent Besons, who was fully acquainted with all that could be said in favour of such a course, and also with the difficulties which stood in the way, to report to the King, and obtain his orders. In the end the Duke of Orleans was told that he must give up all thoughts of returning to Italy, at any rate before the spring ; and it was a great grief to him, although he was quite conscious of the difficulties attending his plan. In the meantime Italy was being devoured piecemeal ; Chivas, Casal, Pavia, Alessandria, and other towns had surrendered to Prince Eugène, who soon afterwards took the citadel of Milan, and was declared Governor-General of the Milanese.

Orders were sent for the army of the Duke of Orleans to go into winter-quarters, and that Prince arrived at Versailles on the 8th of November. He was extremely well

received by the King, who was dining in bed at half-past two, as his custom was on days when he had taken medicine. Afterwards he went to see Monseigneur at Meudon, and supped with the King as usual.

He was most cordially received by everybody. As soon as he had got rid of the crowd, I went to his rooms. Nancreé got hold of me as I was going in, and, without giving me a moment, began to disculpate himself from any share in the foolish journey of the two women; he even followed the Duke of Orleans, who was leading me into his *entresol*, and continued to defend himself in his presence. I confess I had given him credit for too much sense to have had anything to do with it; but society generally had not judged him so favourably. It was then that the Duke of Orleans thanked me, in the most affectionate way, for having written so frankly about this journey. He confessed that, though he had been angry with the women at first, he had yielded to temptation, with the precautions which I have mentioned. "And that is just where you made a mistake, Sir," I said, interrupting him. "Quite true," he replied. "It was a silly thing to do; but who does not make mistakes sometimes?"

Nancreé then went out, and, the door having been closed to visitors, we had a long conversation by ourselves. I gave the Prince full information regarding the affairs of the Court which concerned him, and many other things which I had not cared to write about, even in cipher. He then told me all about the Italian campaign, and the succession of blunders—to give them no harsher name—which had brought about the disaster of Turin. He described La Feuillade as an imperious young man, intoxicated by pride and ambition, detested by the army; full of valour and talent, but also of whims and fancies; of quick perception, but never caring to look beyond what he saw at the first glance; intolerant of advice, and consequently incapable of learning anything from others; equally incapable of correcting his own mistakes, because he always acted first and reflected afterwards, brilliant without solidity, and a most dangerous man in supreme command because he thought he understood people's business better than they did themselves.

The Prince added that, from what the King had said to him, and the knowledge he displayed of La Feuillade's character, he looked upon the latter as a ruined man. He

said that, out of gratitude to Chamillart, he had done his best to palliate La Feuillade's conduct, little as he deserved it ; but the King had scolded him for taking his part, and this was the only occasion throughout their interview on which he had shown any sign of anger. He added that he had left La Feuillade in Dauphiné, and Chamillart had begged him to ask the King that he might remain there ; but he had not ventured to do so, after the way the King had spoken to him, and he felt sure La Feuillade would be recalled.

I had several other conversations with the Duke of Orleans, as well as with Generals and other officers arriving from the army ; and made myself thoroughly acquainted with everything that had happened during the campaign. All thoughts of returning to Italy were abandoned ; the army was reduced to the strength necessary to maintain a purely defensive campaign on the Alpine frontier ; and drafts made from it to reinforce the army in Spain, in hopes of recovering our superiority in that country.

A few days later La Feuillade received orders to return. Although he could have had no real hopes that he would be left at Grenoble, his recall was such a bitter pill for him that he refused to obey for more than a fortnight, during which he sent courier after courier to his father-in-law. The King was furious at his disobedience, and Chamillart in the greatest embarrassment. At last peremptory orders were sent to him to return at once, to the great joy of the town and province, where he had not made himself beloved. At his very first arrival there he had quarrelled with Cardinal Le Camus, who was only prevented by the King's orders from excommunicating him formally, on account of a very licentious masquerade which he gave ; at the same time the King sent La Feuillade a warning to behave better.

La Feuillade was several days at Paris before he ventured to approach Versailles ; at last Chamillart obtained the King's permission for him to pay his respects to him in Madame de Maintenon's room, so as to avoid a public reception. On the 13th of December Chamillart, having some business to transact with the King, took La Feuillade with him. As soon as the King saw him with his son-in-law in tow, he rose and went to the door, and, without giving them time to utter a word, said in a most serious voice to La Feuillade : " We are both of us very unfortunate, sir ! " and immediately turned his back on him. La Feuillade,

who was still on the threshold, went out again at once, without daring to say a word. The King never spoke to him again; it was a long time before he would even allow Monseigneur to ask him to Meudon, or permit him to come to Marly when his wife was there. It was noticed that he always turned away his eyes when he saw him.

Such was the catastrophe of this Phaëton. He saw his case was hopeless, and sold his equipages, giving out that, having commanded an army-in-chief, he could not condescend to serve as a Lieutenant-General under another; he apparently forgot what he had previously said about serving under Médavid. In this state of disgrace he left no stone unturned, and tried all sorts of mean devices to regain his position. He used even to deplore his hard fate to everybody, and make apologies for his conduct. Nobody cared to listen to him; nobody pitied him; and everybody despised him. I think there never was a more foolish man, nor one more thoroughly dishonourable, to the very marrow of his bones. I must now go back a little, having postponed various matters in order not to interrupt the story of this disaster in Italy, which followed very closely upon those of Ramillies and Barcelona.

CHAPTER XXII

1706—1707

Visit of the Elector of Cologne—Death of Madame Barbésieux—A favour shown to Father de la Chaise—A dispute about a hat—Dukes and flunkies—The King discusses the battle of Ramillies with the Duke de Rohan—Marriage of M. de Beauvilliers' half-brother—Kindness of Madame de Beauvilliers—Arrival of Bergheyck—Return of Vendôme—Courcillon—Madame de Maintenon taken in—The King cuts down his expenses—Madame de Montespan—Death of Prince Louis of Baden—Birth of an heir to the crown—A marriage in the Noailles family—Death of the Count de Grammont—His character—Search for gold in the Pyrenees—Madame de Caylus recalled—Important captures at sea—Marshal de Noailles resigns in favour of his son—The Priory of Poissy—An Abbess's tricks discovered—Death of the Bishop of Autun—The original of Tartuffe—King James II works a miracle—Balls at Marly—Madame du Maine—The Duke of Orleans to command in Spain—Marshal de Villeroy calumniates Chamillart, who shows me all the correspondence previous to the battle of Ramillies—I try in vain to save the Duke de Villeroy.

THE Elector of Cologne, having lost his dominions, preferred taking a journey to Rome to sojourning in some of our Flemish towns. He arrived at Paris about the middle of September, strictly *incognito*, and stayed at the house of his envoy. Ten or twelve days later he went to Versailles to have an audience of the King, accompanied by the principal members of his suite. Such of the courtiers as had the *entrées* were allowed to be present, and Monseigneur was in the room with his sons. The King received the Elector standing and uncovered, with the utmost graciousness, and, in introducing the three Princes, said : " Here is your brother-in-law with your two nephews ; I am myself your near relation, so you are in your own family." After a little conversation the King took him through the Gallery to see the Duchess of Burgundy, whom he did not salute, because in the King's presence she kisses nobody. Afterwards he went to Madame, who kissed him, and conversed with him for some time in German ; he then visited the Duchess of Orleans, who was in bed, and she kissed him.

This first visit to Versailles did not last long ; but he saw the King on several other occasions, and also the Duke of Burgundy, who had a long and animated conversation with him.

During his stay at Paris he changed his mind about going to Rome, where, owing to his dispute with the Cardinals about precedence and his situation with respect to the Emperor, his position would have been unpleasant ; especially since all our troops, except Médauid's corps, had been driven out of Italy. As Arch-chancellor of the Empire in Germany, he claimed the right of dressing like a Cardinal. He wore a short black cassock, sometimes with a red cap, sometimes with a black one ; and his stockings varied in like manner. He wore a very bushy wig, rather long ; his complexion was fair ; he was humpbacked and cruelly ugly, but his manner and conversation were quite unembarrassed. The King took a great fancy to him. After taking leave of the King at Marly he retired to Flanders, and finally settled at Lille.

The death of Saint-Pouenge occurred at an opportune moment for the King to show that Chamillart did not share the disgrace of his son-in-law. Saint-Pouenge was Grand-Treasurer to the Order, and the King decorated Chamillart with that office.

Madame Barbésieux died at Paris, quite young, after a long illness. Her misfortunes had never ceased since her rupture with her husband, and his death did not restore her to society. She left two daughters, both of whom died young : the Duchess d'Harcourt, who left children, and Madame de Bouillon. She also left a son, who died soon afterwards, so that the Duchess d'Harcourt inherited nearly all her wealth, and their grandfather, d'Aligre, got very little of it.

The King gave Maréchal the reversion of his office of First Surgeon for his son, who was working in the military hospitals in Flanders. This son was a thoroughly lazy man, who gave no promise of rivalling his father as a surgeon. The King could not refrain from telling his valets that, if he did not make himself skilful in his profession, he would take another surgeon, in spite of the reversion which he had given him. This gave a great fright to all the other holders of reversions ; but no harm came to any of them, except to a few Secretaries of State.

The King gave Father de la Chaise a very marked sign of his favour. This Father, who was of gentle birth, wished to be thought a man of quality. His brother had, through his influence, been appointed Captain of the Guard of the King's door, and his son had succeeded him in that office. The son had married a lady named Du Gué-Bagnolz, of a rich family of the gown. Father de la Chaise was much grieved at being unable to procure for her an invitation to Marly; but the King, in spite of his affection for his confessor, could not bring himself to allow his niece to eat at the table of the Duchess of Burgundy or enter her carriage. It happened this year that when the King went to Marly to the feast of St. Hubert, the Duchess of Burgundy did not accompany him because she was *enceinte*; and for that reason the visit only lasted from Wednesday to Saturday. Madame had a bad cold, and was also absent. The King thought this was just the opportunity he wanted, and named Madame de la Chaise for Marly. In this way she acquired no right of admission to the royal table or carriages; but the point was unperceived by most people, whereas every one knew that she had been invited to Marly. Father de la Chaise was delighted. This invitation was a great mortification to Saint-Pierre, whose wife was not admitted to Marly even on this footing; and the Duchess of Orleans was rather vexed to find that she could not do as much for the wife of her First Equerry as Father de la Chaise had done for his niece.

This visit to Marly gave rise to a rather absurd quarrel. It was wet weather, which, however, did not prevent the King from going out in the gardens to see some planting. His hat was soaked through, and a valet brought him another. The Duke de Tresmes presented it to him, being on duty for the quarter in place of the Duke d'Aumont. Thereupon the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, who was present, made a great fuss. He declared that the Duke de Tresmes, who was a friend of his, had encroached upon his office; his honour was at stake, and all was lost. It was with great difficulty that the quarrel was made up. That is our Dukes all over; any one may encroach on their rank who pleases, and not a word is said about it, but for a hat presented by the wrong person all is fuss and fury. I hardly like to say it, but such it is to be a flunkey!

During this same visit to Marly the Duke of Burgundy

gave up going to hear the music, of which he was extremely fond ; he also sold all the jewels he had inherited from the Dauphiness, his mother, which were very valuable, and gave the proceeds to the poor. For some time he had given up attending the theatre.

Towards the end of October a marriage was arranged between the Archduke and the Princess of Wolfenbuttel, of the same house as the reigning Empress and the Duke of Hanover, who was afterwards King of England. She was a Lutheran, and went through a course of instruction in order to become a Catholic. Protestants believe that Catholics can be saved in their religion ; for a long time they admitted as much, and only denied it afterwards in order to evade the logical consequences of their admission. It is owing to this persuasion that they have so little difficulty in embracing the Catholic religion when some worldly advantage, matrimonial or otherwise, is to be derived from it ; whereas there is no example of a Catholic prince becoming a Protestant or allowing his children to do so, no matter what the temptation might be.

The campaign in Spain ended with the capture of Carthage, which surrendered to the Duke of Berwick. Almost on the same day Bay took Alcantara by escalade, with the loss of only three or four men, and recovered a number of guns which we had lost. After these exploits the army went into winter-quarters.

The Prince de Rohan was one of the first officers to return from Flanders, and the King had a long conversation with him about the battle of Ramillies and its consequences. The King's confidence in him can be attributed only to the fact that he was Madame de Soubise's son. He had behaved bravely during the battle, but he was not a man from whom anything more than bravery was to be expected. He knew less about military matters than he did about the Court ; where, though he had very little intelligence, he had profited wonderfully by the lessons of his clever mother.

Surville had been released from the Bastille at the expiration of his sentence ; the King now told the Duke de Guiche to bring back La Barre with him from the army when he came. On his arrival he presented La Barre, whom the King immediately called into his private room. There he told him that he had not been to blame in his quarrel with Surville ; that Surville had been punished ; and, as an old

officer of established reputation, he might very well let the matter drop ; he therefore asked him, as a friend, to lay aside his resentment, and if that did not suffice he ordered him to do so as his King and master ; but he preferred to ask him as a friend to be reconciled with a good grace. The reply of La Barre to such a speech from a great King to a private person of his position may be readily imagined. A week later the Marshals of France brought about a formal reconciliation between Surville and La Barre ; but Surville remained in disgrace.

M. de Beauvilliers had two half-brothers by his father's second marriage, whom he had brought up with his own children ; they were all four about the same age. The elder of the two wished to take Orders, and persisted in his determination after the death of M. de Beauvilliers' sons. The younger was at Malta, preparing to become a Knight ; but M. de Beauvilliers sent for him, and treated him henceforth as his only son. With Madame de Beauvilliers' concurrence, he settled large sums upon him, resigned his dukedom in his favour, and arranged a marriage for him with the only daughter of Besmaux, who was extremely rich. Her grandfather had been governor of the Bastille, and her aunt was that Madame de Saumery of whom I have spoken in connection with Marshal de Duras. M. and Madame de Beauvilliers took the young couple, who were known as the Duke and Duchess de St. Aignan, to live with them at Versailles, and treated them like their own children. Madame de Beauvilliers' conduct towards them was a marvel of conjugal love. When alone with her in the evening, I have often known her send for them because some intimate friends were coming to supper ; great tears would fall from her eyes ; she confessed to me how painful it was to be reminded continually of the death of her own children by the presence of this adopted son and daughter-in-law ; then, restraining her tears so that no one might perceive them, she began praising the young couple, saying it was no fault of theirs that she had lost her children, and if they were no consolation to her they were so in some degree to M. de Beauvilliers, and that was enough for her ; then, when they came in, she would behave to them as affectionately and kindly as possible. All the arrangements with regard to them were made with the concurrence of M. de Mortemart and his mother, in such a way as not to prejudice the rights

of his wife, who was the daughter of M. and Madame de Beauvilliers. They upheld these rights only too scrupulously.

Bergheyck arrived from Flanders about the end of November. Chamillart lodged him, paid his expenses, and presented him to the King in Madame de Maintenon's room. He was a Fleming, of better family than usual in that country, a Baron at first, and afterwards a Count; but, to say the truth, if he was either it was only after the fashion of our own Ministers. He had been employed in the financial department of the Netherlands before the death of Charles II, and the Elector of Bavaria had obtained his continuance in that employment. He inspired confidence by his talents and integrity; his fidelity and zeal were supported by great ability, industry, and capacity for governing; he was a man of wide views; modest, conciliatory, and perfectly disinterested. He thoroughly understood, not only the finances of the Netherlands, but all the affairs of that country, and before long he was entrusted with the entire management of them by the Spanish Court.

He was a man who never pushed himself forward; he gave his opinion clearly and firmly, but if his advice was not taken he would carry out his orders with as much zeal as if he had himself recommended them. After he resigned he lived for several years in retirement, perfectly contented, and taking no part in public affairs; he was a thoroughly good man, not well off, yet he never asked any favours for his family. He would have rendered even greater services if his advice had been taken more frequently, especially latterly; and if he had been employed up to the end of his long and honourable life. He did not stay long at Versailles on this occasion; he worked a good deal with Chamillart, and had several long private interviews with the King, who treated him with friendship and distinction. Even after his retirement he was much respected in Flanders, where he was generally loved and regretted. He was one of those valuable men whom Kings are rarely wise enough to appreciate; and, when they do, they usually grow tired of them before long.

After visiting the maritime places of Flanders, M. de Vendôme arrived at Versailles about the beginning of December. He was well received, because he was M. de Vendôme; still, there was a marked difference between this

reception and that which he had met with on the occasion of his two last returns. The avenging hero had not succeeded in putting matters to rights in Flanders; he had been obliged to let the enemy have his own way in everything: Officers came back on leave from Flanders, which they had not done from the army in Italy. Those who came back reported that they had not recognised the hero they had been led to expect. They saw nothing in him but unbounded pride and boasting, indolence carried to the pitch of apathy, and habits of debauchery which shocked the most depraved. When they compared notes with officers of the army in Italy, they found their impressions confirmed. Vendôme was unmasked; but, as the King retained his prejudice in his favour, and fools and flunkies are always in the majority, he was still regarded as a popular hero, though in reality overthrown.

I should certainly not defile my paper by mentioning an operation for fistula which Courcillon, Dangeau's only son, underwent at Versailles, but for its ridiculous accompaniments. Courcillon was a young man of great bravery; very clever, and his mind was not without cultivation; he was witty, but altogether given up to jokes, impiety, and the most filthy debauchery—to which, as was generally supposed, he owed the necessity for this operation. His mother, of whom I spoke at the time of her marriage, was a most intimate friend of Madame de Maintenon, and they were the only persons about the Court who were ignorant of Courcillon's habits. Madame de Dangeau, who was passionately fond of him, was in great distress, and could hardly tear herself from his bedside; Madame de Maintenon sympathised with her, and went there every day to keep her company till the time when the King went to her rooms, and very often spent the whole morning there till dinner-time. Madame d'Heudicourt, another friend of Madame de Maintenon's, whom I have also mentioned, was admitted to amuse them; hardly any one else.

Courcillon used to listen to them and talk to them about religion, making reflections suitable to his condition; the two ladies were lost in admiration, and told everybody that he was a saint. Madame d'Heudicourt and the other persons present could hardly restrain their laughter, for they knew the cunning rascal well, and he used to make faces at them on the sly; they could not refrain from telling

the story. Courcillon was bored to death by the honour of having Madame de Maintenon for a nurse ; in the evening, when the two ladies were gone, he used to see some of his own friends and make the funniest lamentations to them, laughing at his own pious sentiments and the credulity of the ladies ; so that the whole Court was amused by this comedy so long as his illness lasted. No one ventured to tell Madame de Maintenon how she had been taken in : she always retained the most respectful admiration for Courcillon's virtue, and quoted it frequently as an example, so that the King himself was impressed by it.

After his recovery Courcillon took not the slightest trouble to cultivate the valuable favour which he had gained, nor did he change his accustomed mode of living in the slightest degree ; yet Madame de Maintenon never found it out, and his neglect of her never had any effect on her sentiments for him. It must be confessed that, apart from the extraordinary skill she showed in managing the King, she was in all respects the queen of dupes.

The situation of public affairs was extremely critical ; we had lost much territory and many men, whom it was necessary to replace ; the expense of the war was consequently increased considerably, and the King found it advisable to discontinue the New Year's gifts which he usually made to the Sons and Daughters of France. These amounted to a large sum ; he had already reduced them for the last two or three years. Every first of January the Royal Treasury brought him for his own New Year's gift 35,000 louis d'or, whatever the rate of exchange might be ; this year he only accepted 25,000. Madame de Montespan was the chief sufferer by this economy ; the King had, since her retirement from the Court, given her 12,000 louis d'or annually ; this year he sent her word that he must reduce the sum to 8,000. Madame de Montespan did not seem in the least annoyed ; she said she regretted it chiefly on account of the poor, to whom as a matter of fact she was very liberal.

Chamillart received a more satisfactory New Year's present ; namely, the reversion of his office of Secretary of State for his son, who was only eighteen years old. The pretext was to save the father three or four hours' work in signing his name every day ; but the King was always as liberal with the reversions of these important offices as he

was niggardly with all others. It was only in his principal affairs that he allowed very young men to serve him ; he thought he showed in this way that he required no real assistance in governing. For the same reason he made some strange appointments to these offices, independently of the reversions, which had disastrous consequences for the State and for himself. This favour was an additional blow to Marshal de Villeroy, who had quarrelled openly with Chamillart, and had not only refused to see him when he returned, but had forbidden his son the Duke de Villeroy to do so ; at which Chamillart had been much hurt and the King very angry. In order to please the King, Monseigneur and the Duke of Berry went in the afternoon to see Madame Chamillart and congratulate the family ; and the Duchess of Orleans, who had, not very wisely, announced that she would visit nobody, as I have already mentioned, laid aside her pride on this occasion, and also went to see Madame Chamillart.

Soon afterwards Chamillart's son went to inspect the fortified places on the Flemish and German frontiers. Count du Bourg, long afterwards Marshal of France, was not ashamed to offer himself as his Mentor, and a better choice could not have been made. The extraordinary thing was that all the honour showered upon him, which was quite as great as if he had been a Prince of the Blood, if not greater, did not turn his young head ; the young schoolboy, for he was little more, returned as modest, respectful, and obliging as if he had not been the son of the favourite Minister and himself a Secretary of State. He made himself popular everywhere.

Prince Louis of Baden died, at the age of fifty-two. He had won several important victories over the Turks, and had since been chosen almost every year to command the Imperial armies on the Rhine. He was justly considered one of the greatest generals of his day.

The Elector of Cologne, who had never taken Holy Orders, decided to take them. The Archbishop of Cambrai went to him at Lille, and on five successive days admitted him to the four minor Orders, ordained him deacon and priest, and gave him consecration as a Bishop. He afterwards took great delight in performing ecclesiastical functions, especially in saying Mass and officiating pontifically.

The Duchess of Burgundy gave birth to a Duke of Brittany

on the 8th of January. There was general joy at this event ; but the King, remembering the loss of the former heir, forbade all expensive rejoicings on this occasion. In spite of the war and his just displeasure with the Duke of Savoy, he wrote to him to announce this happy event, and received a congratulatory letter from him in reply.

Madame de Montgon, Lady of the Palace to the Duchess of Burgundy, died in Auvergne on a visit to her husband's family and property. She was the daughter of Madame d'Heudicourt. I said enough about her at the time of the formation of the Duchess of Burgundy's household to have nothing to add here, except that she was lively, insinuating, and rather spiteful, with a mocking humour ; and that her death was a grief to the King, Madame de Maintenon, and the Duchess of Burgundy, for they found much amusement in her. Her place was sought after by all the ladies who thought themselves qualified for it. The Noailles secured it for their daughter, Madame de la Vallière, who had more wit, capacity, and genius for intrigue than all the rest of the Noailles family put together. She was amiable when she chose, but her temper was uncertain ; and she could be even ruder than her father, which is saying a good deal.

In this same month of January the Noailles arranged a marriage which had important consequences for both families : that of their sixth daughter with Gondrin, d'Antin's eldest son. D'Antin gave them Bellegarde, worth 10,000 a year, Madame de Montespan gave jewels worth 100,000 francs, and the Noailles gave 100,000 crowns, and engaged to keep the married pair for ten years. The conduct of the Duchess de Noailles was a great embarrassment to her family ; they had to keep her as much as possible in seclusion, for she inherited her father's infirmity ; her office was a source of continual trouble ; they had to let her perform its duties sometimes, but much more often to prevent her from doing so. She was a great annoyance to Madame de Maintenon, so it was decided that she should resign in favour of her sister-in-law. How surprised the King would have been if he could have foreseen that Madame de Gondrin would one day marry the Count de Toulouse, and that under his successor she would become the important personage we see her to-day !

The Count de Grammont died at the end of January at the age of eighty-six, having been perfectly sound in body

and mind till within the last year. He was the brother of Marshal de Grammont's father, and his mother was sister to Boutteville, who was beheaded for fighting a duel: Marshal de Luxembourg's father. Count de Grammont, after following M. le Prince to Flanders, went over to England, where he made love to Miss Hamilton so publicly that her brothers compelled him to marry her. He was an extremely clever man; but he showed his cleverness only in sarcasm and witty repartees, hitting off people's absurdities and foibles in a few stinging words which it was not easy to forget. He spared neither man nor woman; he would utter the most biting sarcasms in public, even before the King; indeed, he rather preferred to do so in the King's presence; neither merit, rank, favour, nor high office could save his victims. In this way he used to give the King a great deal of cruel information; he had put himself on the footing of saying anything he chose to him, even about his Ministers. He was like a mad dog, biting everybody; and his cowardice was so notorious that he escaped all punishment.

He was, moreover, an impudent rogue and cheated at cards in the most unblushing manner; he was a great gambler all his life. He took money wherever he could get it, yet he was always a beggar. The King gave him a great deal, but even his bounties could not enable him to make two ends meet. He never stirred from the Court. He would stoop to any meanness if he wanted to get anything out of people, even those whom he had slandered most cruelly; but he would begin to tear them again as soon as he had got all he wanted. He had neither truth nor honour; indeed, he boasted of his own vileness, and told many amusing stories about it; he has gone so far as to record it for the benefit of posterity in his *Memoirs*,¹ which not even his bitterest enemy would have published. In short, he was allowed to do anything, and gave himself full licence; and was on that footing till he grew old.

I have spoken of him before, and at greater length about his wife; and I have related the cruel compliment he paid the Duke de St. Aignan when his son, the Duke de Beauvilliers, was made president of the Council of Finance. He said an equally cutting thing to the Archbishop of Reims as he was coming out of the King's room, hanging down his

¹ His *Memoirs* were written by his brother-in law, Anthony Hamilton,

head, after his audience on the subject of the monk of Auville which I have already explained. "My lord Archbishop," he said with an insulting air, "*verba volant, but scripta manent*. I am your humble servant!" The Archbishop passed on without a word.

Another time the King was speaking of some northern Envoy who had come to offer congratulations and transact some other business, in which he had acquitted himself very badly. The King said he could not understand how such a man could have been selected for the purpose. "You will find, Sir," said Count de Grammont, "that he is related to some Minister." Hardly a day passed without his giving somebody a hit of this sort.

When very ill, about a year before his death, his wife began to talk to him about God. He had entirely forgotten all he had ever learnt about religion, and he was lost in astonishment at its mysteries. At last, turning towards his wife, he said: "But, Countess, is all that really true that you are telling me?" Afterwards, hearing her repeat the Lord's Prayer, he said: "That is a fine prayer, Countess; who composed it?" He had not the slightest tincture of religion. One could fill volumes with his sayings and doings; but, apart from their impudence, their wit, and their rascality, they would be simply deplorable. With all these vices, unmixed with any trace of virtue, he had made himself the terror of the Court, and his death was looked upon as a relief. The King favoured and distinguished him throughout his life. He was a Knight of the Order, of the promotion of 1688.

Madame de Frontenac also died, in a fine suite of apartments at the Arsenal, which the late Duke du Lude had given her when he was Grand-Master of Artillery. She and Mademoiselle d'Outrelaise, who lived with her, were known as the Divines; they expected incense to be offered to them as goddesses, and people vied with each other in offering it. Though they never went near the Court, they set the fashions to the best society both there and at Paris. Mademoiselle d'Outrelaise had long been dead. Madame de Frontenac was very old, but nevertheless saw a great deal of good company at her house. She had no children, and left what little she had to leave to Béringhem, First Equerry, out of friendship for him.

Necessity compels Kings as well as private persons to try

every method of obtaining money. About this time a prospector named Rodes believed, or at any rate made others believe, that he had discovered veins of gold in the Pyrenees. He wrote to Chamillart that if he could be provided with 1,800 workmen he would engage to supply a million livres every week. Fifty-two millions a year seemed a very desirable addition to the revenue, and the labourers were supplied; but, though the people of the country confirmed Rodes' statements, all hope of profit was soon given up. The experiment was persisted in for some time out of obstinacy, but the money sunk in it was entirely thrown away, and after a time nothing more was said about it.

I have already spoken of the banishment of Madame de Caylus to Paris, and of the pension given her to induce her to give up Father de la Tour as her spiritual director. When she fell into other hands she grew tired of the austere life she had been leading, and gradually returned to the world. She met Madame de Maintenon several times at Versailles and St. Cyr, which she had hitherto refused to do; always, however, returning to Paris to sleep. Afterwards she went to spend some time at St. Germain with the Duke and Duchess de Noailles. At last Madame de Maintenon, pleased with her obedience, procured her recall; she had always been fond of her, and was delighted to put an end to her banishment.

She was given rooms, but remained in seclusion, seeing nobody but Madame de Maintenon or Madame d'Heudicourt. By degrees she began to see the Noailles, and M. d'Harcourt, whose wife was her late husband's sister. She recovered her beauty, her charms, and her cheerfulness. She was invited to Marly and to the King's entertainments, which was a great mark of his complaisance for Madame de Maintenon. He had never liked Madame de Caylus; he thought she laughed at him. Amusing as she was, he was never at his ease with her; and, as she was conscious of his dislike, she always felt constrained in his presence. Nevertheless, she was admitted to everything that was going on. She was entrusted with the care of the Duchess de Noailles¹; she took compassion on her, obtained some relaxation of her captivity, and finally enabled her to take her place again among the ladies of the Court. Before long Madame de

¹ Madame de Maintenon's niece, who was not quite right in her head.

Caylus' apartments became an important rendezvous; persons of distinction considered it a favour to be admitted there. She renewed her friendship with Madame la Duchesse and other old acquaintances, and, as her fit of devotion was now at an end, she made fun of all her pious practices, telling many amusing stories at her own expense.

The mutual attachment between her and the Duke de Villeroy still subsisted; and she had subjugated Madame de Maintenon to such a degree that they used to meet without any signs of displeasure on her part. But after what had happened to her, it was not till some years later that Madame de Caylus ventured to attempt anything on behalf of the Duke de Villeroy. Every morning she was surrounded by Generals, Ministers, and distinguished persons, who paid court to her in hopes of obtaining her good word with Madame de Maintenon. But she was only playing with them, for in reality she could do nothing. If she ever did attempt to use her influence with her aunt she reserved it entirely for Harcourt, whose designs she furthered as much as possible.

It was at this time that the English consummated the long-wished-for union with Scotland, as they call it, which the Scotch, with more accuracy, call the reduction of Scotland to a province. Henceforth the English were entirely the masters, and Scotland was no longer an embarrassment to them. It is difficult to understand how so proud a people as the Scotch, so jealous of their independence, and so hostile to the English in all ages, could be brought to submit to such a yoke.

The Marquis de Brancas returned from Spain to report to the King on the military situation in that country, and to receive his orders for the next campaign. He was destined to serve in Castile, in the detached corps commanded by the Marquis de Bay. This M. de Bay was the son of an inn-keeper in Franche-Comté; he was a man of courage and capacity, and, as good officers are scarce in Spain, he had received rapid promotion. He eventually reached the grade of Captain-General, which is the highest rank in the Spanish army, and received the Golden Fleece, a scandalous degradation of that Order. But he was a capable man, and a good general, and rendered useful service.

Quite at the end of January the brother of Marshal Villars entered Port Mahon with three ships of war, landed a small

force under a heavy fire, and succeeded in reducing the whole island of Minorca. Many monks were captured fighting obstinately among the rebels, and were all shot ; they could not be hanged because no one would serve as hangman. A few days later a vessel arrived at Brest from Mexico with a very large sum of money for the King of Spain. The Duke of Albuquerque, Viceroy of that country, had sent it on hearing that the King had been driven from Madrid and was wandering about the country. About six weeks afterwards Duquesne, having sailed from Brest with his squadron, came across fifteen English ships, escorted by two ships of war, which took to flight. Duquesne captured all the merchantmen, except one, which was sunk ; they were freighted with powder, muskets, saddles, and all sorts of supplies for the English troops in Spain. These troops were in great want, for they could get nothing from Portugal, nor from the Spanish provinces which had submitted to the Archduke.

Marshal de Noailles fell ill about the beginning of February, and his family were much alarmed about him, for he was enormously corpulent. Notwithstanding the high favour of the Noailles family, backed up by that of Madame de Maintenon, they had never ventured to ask for the reversion of the Marshal's office for his son, the Duke de Noailles. The King was determined to grant no reversions, except for the Secretaryships of State. The office of Captain of the Guard was one which he usually gave only to Marshals of France ; Marshal de Noailles had the Scotch company, the first and most distinguished of all ; and the Duke de Noailles was only twenty-seven years of age. The family, however, resolved to get round the difficulty about the reversion by inducing Marshal de Noailles to resign his office, and endeavour to have his son appointed in his place. It was not easy to persuade him ; but after a good deal of trouble they extorted, rather than obtained, a letter to the King resigning his office. All this was done in concert with Madame de Maintenon. The King received the Marshal's letter on the 17th of February, on his return from a walk at Marly, and went as usual to Madame de Maintenon's room. Soon afterwards he sent for the Duke de Noailles and told him that, in accordance with his father's request, he appointed him to the vacant office. Next day the Duke took the oath, assumed the staff of office, and carried out the duties of Captain of the Guard for the remainder of the quarter.

About this time Madame de Mailly, a sister of the Archbishop of Arles, was appointed Abbess of the rich Priory of Poissy, in which she was a professed nun. The right of nomination to this Priory had been long contested; the nuns claimed the right of electing their Abbess; and, as a matter of fact, they had always exercised that right since the Concordat. On the occasion of the last vacancy the King had nominated a sister of the Duke de Chaulnes. The Pope raised no objection; but the nuns closed the Priory gates in the face of the Queen, who had come to introduce the new Abbess, and they had to be broken open by the guards. There was a great uproar at this installation; the nuns screamed and protested; the Abbess was insulted, and the Queen herself treated with disrespect; many of the nuns were removed to other convents. Madame de Chaulnes, though she was there for many years, never had a quiet life. She was an immense woman of terrifying appearance, exactly like her brother in face and figure; more of an Abbess, more haughty and more impertinent, than all other Abbesses put together; and she was determined to pay out her nuns for insulting her on her arrival. To inspire them with more respect for her she hit upon the plan of causing the gatekeeper to come to her while she was with her flock, and announce the visit of M. Colbert, M. de Louvois, or M. le Tellier. She would express her surprise and annoyance, for these visits were frequent; then she would shut herself up in the room where visitors were received; and none of the nuns dared disturb these important interviews, which lasted as long as she thought proper. Afterwards she would complain bitterly that she had not embraced the religious life to be disturbed by consultations about affairs of the Court and other worldly concerns; and would seek repose among her community from these cares, which she said distracted her from her duties as Abbess.

At last these Ministerial visits became so frequent that one of the nuns, sharper than the rest, began to be suspicious. On the occasion of the next visit, three or four of them posted themselves where they could see the gate and courtyard, and saw that no carriage was there. They tried the experiment again; at last all the nuns were satisfied that none of these Ministers had ever set foot at Poissy. The Abbess saw that she was found out, and, furious and ashamed as she was, dared not keep up the farce; but she made the

nuns pay dearly for their discovery. Her reign was long and tyrannical. Towards the end she took an aversion to any nun who she thought might be her successor, especially to Madame de Mailly, and she persecuted her accordingly. Madame de Mailly had to go elsewhere to seek the repose which she could no longer find at Poissy ; she retired to Longchamps, and was there when she was appointed Abbess.

In order to enable her to take possession quietly, the King availed himself of an accident which had befallen this fine Priory some time before the death of Madame de Chaulnes. The church, which is very magnificent, had been struck by lightning, and considerably damaged by fire. The resources of the Priory were not nearly sufficient to repair it ; the King undertook to do so on condition that the nuns renounced for ever all claim to elect their Abbess, and that the Pope gave him the right of nomination. The nuns consented, though sorely against their will, and the Pope sanctioned the arrangement. The repairs, however, were not begun till the state of Madame de Chaulnes' health became alarming. They cost nearly a million.

Nevertheless, Madame de Mailly met with considerable opposition. All the nuns liked and respected her, and declared that they would have chosen her themselves ; but they could not tolerate the nomination. The new Abbess behaved with gentleness and patience. She let some of the more obstinate nuns retire elsewhere, and won over the others by kindness. However, to make an end of the affair, after the King's death the nuns renewed their protest, declaring that they had been oppressed by his authority, and a regular lawsuit ensued between them and Madame de Mailly, which was decided in the Council of Regency. Madame de Mailly won her case ; indeed, it was impossible that she should lose it after all the precautions which had been taken here and at Rome to secure the right of nomination for ever. In time the nuns, overcome by the merit and gentleness of Madame de Mailly, came to look upon her as a mother ; and by their own confession they live more happily than any religious community in the kingdom.

About this time there died an old Bishop who throughout his life had striven to push his fortunes and become a personage : Roquette, a man of mean extraction, who had contrived to get hold of the see of Autun. He had joined all parties in succession : he had belonged to Madame de

Longueville, to her brother the Prince of Conti, to Cardinal Mazarin; but through all changes he was a tool of the Jesuits. He was all sugar and honey, intimate with the important ladies of that time, and mixed up with every political intrigue; at the same time very sanctimonious. He was the original of Molière's Tartuffe, and no one could mistake the likeness. The Archbishop of Reims was once passing through Autun, and admired the Bishop's magnificent service of plate. "What you see there," said the Bishop, "is the property of the poor." "It seems to me," replied the Archbishop bluntly, "that you might have spared them the expense of the workmanship!" He always pocketed rebukes of this sort without wincing, and became more obsequious than ever to those who administered them; but he went on steadily pursuing his own advancement all the same, never turning aside in the slightest degree. But in spite of all his scheming he remained a fixture at Autun, and never contrived to obtain a better see.

Towards the end of his life he took to paying court to the King and Queen of England, for he always hoped to get something by insinuation and flattery. The Bishop of Bayeux, Nesmond, chose a better way of paying court to them; he hardly ever saw them, but sent them every year 10,000 crowns; and no one ever knew it till after his death. To finish with the Bishop of Autun, he had a lachrymal fistula. Soon after the death of the King of England he announced that he had been miraculously cured by his intercession, and hastened to tell the news to the Queen of England, Madame de Maintenon, and the King. His eye really did look a little different; but a day or two afterwards it was as bad as ever, and the fistula could not be concealed. He was so ashamed of himself that he went to hide himself in his diocese, and hardly ever appeared afterwards.

All through the winter there were many balls at Marly; the King gave none at Versailles, but the Duchess of Burgundy went to several, given by Madame la Duchesse, the Maréchale de Noailles, and others. She also went to the house of Madame du Maine, who took more and more to acting plays with her servants and some retired comedians. The whole Court went to them; but no one could understand how she could give herself the fatigue of dressing up like an actress, learning and declaiming the parts of the chief

characters, and making a public exhibition of herself on the stage. The Duke du Maine dared not oppose her for fear she should go off her head completely, as he once told Madame la Princesse plainly, in the hearing of Madame de Saint-Simon. He used to stand in a corner by the door, doing the honours. Not to speak of the absurdity of these entertainments, they cost a great deal of money.

In the meantime the King appointed the Generals to command the various armies. Marshal Villars was to command the army of the Rhine, and M. de Vendôme that of Flanders, under the Elector of Bavaria. The Duke of Orleans, seeing no prospect of leading an army into Italy, was anxious to go to Spain. He could not serve under the Elector of Bavaria, and it was not thought advisable to offend that Prince by giving him a superior. His request was therefore granted, at the expense of the Duke of Berwick : and, after the disastrous result of putting him under Marchin's tutelage, it was decided to give him absolute authority. It was a great pleasure to him to be given command of an army, no longer as a mere figurehead, but in reality. The Duke de Noailles was to command in Rousillon with three *maréchaux-de-camp* under him.

The Duke de Villeroy's name was omitted from the list of Generals who were to serve ; it was a severe blow both to himself and his father. I must explain the reason why he was left out. Marshal de Villeroy, furious at his cold reception and deep disgrace, took to showing people scraps of the letters which he had received from the King and Chamillart. He proclaimed that he had simply obeyed orders, and that it was cruel to blame him for the loss of a battle which he had been urged, even with taunts, to bring on at all hazards. If he had not given battle, he said, he would have been blamed still more severely. These plausible speeches, backed up by fragments of letters which he affected to show with great mystery, began to make people think that Chamillart, in despair at our long series of reverses, had thrown the blame on to a man not in a position to defend himself ; it was believed that he had really advised the Marshal to fight ; and that he was abusing his power as a Minister to crush a General who had all the documents necessary to confute him if he could only obtain a hearing.

Although I was a great friend of the Maréchale de Villeroy, I had never been able to put up with the airs of her husband,

whose manner always seemed insulting even when he meant to be most gracious. Sometimes in the morning, on leaving the Gallery, I used to say that I was going out to breathe a little, for the Marshal, strutting up and down like a peacock with his tail spread, had exhausted all the air. I was moreover very intimate with Chamillart; it was only right that I should be his friend after the great services he had rendered me and the confidence with which he treated me. Being seriously alarmed at the effect of the Marshal's discourses, I spoke to Chamillart on the subject at L'Étang. With an emotion very unusual in him, he said it was strange that the Marshal, not content with having deserved so badly of the King, the State, and himself, should undertake to justify himself by such assertions; and if he dared to carry them further he should be forced to appeal for justice to the King, who knew all about the matter; he wished, he said, to behave with more wisdom than the Marshal, but as soon as we returned to Versailles, he would show me, in strict confidence, papers which would amply justify him. On the evening of our return I went to his rooms, and found him at supper by himself, with a circle of his familiar friends round him, as was his custom. As soon as he saw me, he asked me to come near, and said he would be as good as his word. Thereupon he gave me the key of his bureau, told me where I should find the papers he had mentioned, and begged me to go into his private room and read them attentively.

I found three documents; two were minutes of despatches from the King to the Marshal; the third was an original letter from the Marshal, bearing his signature. The King's first despatch was to the effect that our Generals in Flanders had for some time behaved with a caution which had led the enemy to believe that we were afraid of a battle, and it was time to show them the contrary; with this object he had ordered Marshal Marchin to bring a strong detachment from Alsace (the details of which were given). Villeroy was to await its arrival, and then proceed to form the siege of Leewe, Marchin having charge of the siege, while he commanded the covering army; if the enemy showed any sign of attempting to raise the siege he was not to hesitate, but give battle at once, drawing reinforcements from the besieging army if necessary. This is an accurate and complete summary of the contents of this despatch; the Marshal showed scraps of the beginning, which he represented, after

his own fashion, as spurring him on to vigorous action and appealing to his honour. He took care not to show the remainder, which strictly enjoined him to await the arrival of Marchin, and ordered him to give battle only in the event of the enemy attempting to interrupt the siege of Leewe.

The second despatch merely confirmed the first, with various details respecting the troops. Marshal de Villeroy's letter was dated the day before the battle. It contained a report of his march and that of the enemy; it announced no intention of fighting a battle; he merely wound up by saying that, if the enemy came too near, he should have some difficulty in restraining himself. This shows clearly that, far from having given battle in obedience to orders, he thought it necessary to offer an excuse beforehand for doing so; and, even if he had been victorious, he would have been justly blamed for risking the success of the proposed siege by not waiting for his reinforcements. If he had had any sense he would have kept silence after an act of such flagrant disobedience, and its disastrous consequences; for he must have known that it would be easy to disprove his assertions, and that the publication of the truth would be fatal to him.

I was astonished and indignant at the Marshal's uncandid behaviour; I took the keys back to Chamillart and whispered to him what I thought of it. On another occasion I spoke to him about it more at my ease, because we were alone; and I then discovered that the King, though very angry with the Marshal, was unwilling to expose him as his conduct deserved; for he was still influenced either by his old liking for him, or by the protection of Madame de Maintenon. He wished therefore to ignore his behaviour, and Chamillart was so convinced of it that he dared not push Villeroy to extremities, or, if he did attempt it, he failed. He affected to treat Villeroy's talk with contempt, but I saw plainly that this was only assumed because he could do nothing.

Seeing that the Marshal and Chamillart were quite irreconcilable, I determined to do my best for the Duke de Villeroy, whose wife had long been my friend, and who had become so himself. I spoke to them after sounding Chamillart, and it was then that I heard the Marshal had forbidden his son to see the Minister. An officer of any distinction who did not call on the Minister ruined himself irretrievably, and lost the King's favour; he need not

hope for any further opportunities for serving, much less for promotion or advancement. At the request of the Duke and Duchess de Villeroy, I spoke to Chamillart and did my best to induce him to make an exception in this case. He received me kindly and politely, and was evidently pleased that they should make advances to him; but on the subject of the visit he was inflexible. He told me flatly that if the Duke de Villeroy did not call on him he should not serve again. I represented to him the awkward position of the Duke de Villeroy, the unreasonable character of the Marshal, and I put it to him that, as the father had always treated his son harshly in the days of his prosperity, it showed all the more delicacy of feeling in the son if he deferred to his wishes now that he was in disgrace. Chamillart was not to be persuaded. He sent all sorts of kind messages to the Duke de Villeroy, and offered his services in any way except in the army; but it was only in that way that he could be of service to him. The end of it was that the Duke de Villeroy never had another opportunity of serving, and thereby lost the bâton of Marshal of France, which he saw given to comrades of his who had not done more to deserve it, but who had remained in the service.

CHAPTER XXIII

1707

Chamillart's health breaks down—"We will perish together!" Financial straits—A tax on baptisms and marriages—Serious outbreaks at Cahors and Périgord—Marshal Vauban suggests a financial remedy—Boisguilbert's book—Their proposals arouse the hatred of the tax-farmers—Vauban received roughly by the King—His death—Boisguilbert banished—A property tax imposed—The First Equerry carried off by a hostile raiding party—The party captured near Ham—Release of their prisoner—Their commander politely received by the King—Wedding in the Bouillon family—"A little gold ingot"—Outspoken address of First-President Harlay—He resigns—Anecdotes about him—Pelletier succeeds him—The Duke de Nevers—The "parvulos" of Meudon—Mademoiselle Choin.

CHAMILLART was breaking down under the burden of his double office, military and financial; he had no time either to eat or to sleep. Every successive campaign saw our armies destroyed; and the diminution of our territory made it more difficult to raise men and money. The Minister was at his wits' end to supply both, and in addition he had to carry on the usual routine work of his departments. He had more than once told the King that it was beyond his power to discharge functions which would have kept two men fully occupied in the most prosperous times; but the King, remembering the disputes between the Ministers for War and Finance in the time of Colbert and Louvois, could not make up his mind to relieve Chamillart of the Finances. So he had to do the best he could; but at last the machine broke down. He had fits of giddiness; he could digest nothing, and became thinner every day; nevertheless, the wheel had to keep turning without interruption; and there was no one but himself to make it turn. He wrote a pathetic letter to the King, imploring him to relieve him. He pointed out that his work had increased so much that he could not supervise it properly even if he had his full powers; that matters of urgency were constantly brought to him which admitted of no delay, and yet required long and careful

examination ; that his health was breaking down, and, even if it were not, he could not find time to attend to his numerous duties. He ended by saying that he would be unworthy of His Majesty's kindness and confidence if he did not tell him frankly that everything would perish unless he was relieved of some part of his burden.

When he wrote to the King he always left a margin the width of half the sheet of paper, in which the King wrote his answer. Chamillart showed me this one, when the King returned it ; and I was greatly astonished to see that the answer consisted merely of this brief marginal note, in the King's handwriting : " Well, then, we will perish together ! " Chamillart, though highly flattered, was in despair ; this compliment did not restore his failing strength. He began to miss attending the meetings of the Councils, especially of the Council of Despatches ; or, if he was obliged to attend this Council, the King allowed him to speak first, and then withdraw. The reason was that he could not remain standing : and at the Council of Despatches everybody stands all the time, except the Princes and the Chancellor, who are seated ; and if any Dukes belong to it, like the Duke de Beauvilliers, they are seated too.

In this emergency recourse was had to all sorts of methods for raising money. The tax-farmers profited by it to suggest taxes on everything ; and it was long since the Parliaments had been in a position to remonstrate. A tax was imposed on baptisms and marriages, without any respect for those Sacraments. This tax was extremely burdensome and odious, and immediately produced great confusion. The poor baptized their children themselves, without taking them to church, and dispensed with marriage altogether, merely pledging themselves before witnesses. There were consequently no baptismal registers and no record of births ; and the children born of these irregular marriages had, of course, no legal status. The utmost care was taken to prevent these evasions of the law ; that is to say, all sorts of spying and harshness were employed to enforce the payment of the tax.

The murmurs of the people passed, in some places, into open sedition. At Cahors it went so far that it was as much as two battalions could do to prevent the armed peasants from seizing the town ; some of the troops destined for Spain had to be sent there, and the departure of the Duke of

Orleans was delayed in consequence. It was thought advisable to send orders to Le Gendre, Intendant of the province, to suspend the collection of the tax for the present ; and the armed peasants were induced, though not without considerable trouble, to disperse and retire to their villages. At Périgord they all rose in arms, plundered the Government offices, seized a small town and several *châteaux*, and forced some gentlemen to place themselves at their head. They declared loudly that they would pay the *taille* and the poll-tax, the tithes to the clergy, and their dues to their *seigneurs* ; but they could pay no more and would not endure any fresh taxes and vexations. In the end the tax on baptisms and marriages had to be given up, to the great regret of the tax-farmers, who enriched themselves cruelly by their tyranny and rascality.

I have described the character of Vauban at the time when he was appointed Marshal of France. We are now about to see him brought to the grave by a bitter disappointment in a matter which redounded to his honour, and in any country but France would have gained him the richest rewards. To understand the full meaning of what I am about to relate it is necessary to bear in mind the brief sketch I have already made of him, and to know that I described him merely from the reputation of his public actions, never having had the slightest acquaintance with him, nor with any of his friends.

He was a thorough patriot, and had always lamented the misery of the people and the vexations under which they suffered. He knew that much of the expenditure was unavoidable ; he saw how little hope there was that the King would retrench anything of what was spent in splendour and amusements ; and he sighed when he reflected that there was no apparent remedy for burdens which were daily becoming more intolerable. With such sentiments he never took a journey—and he often had occasion to travel throughout the country in all directions—without making inquiries into the value of land and its fertility, the chief industries of the towns, the nature and incidence of taxes, and the mode of collecting them. Not satisfied with what he could see for himself, he employed other persons to check his own observations, and go to places which he was unable to visit. The last twenty years of his life were employed in these inquiries, which cost him a good deal of money.

In the end he convinced himself that land was the only real source of wealth, and he set himself to devise a new system of taxation.

When he had made some progress with it, several pamphlets appeared written by a M. de Boisguilbert, Lieutenant-General for the bishopric of Rouen, who had for some time been working on the same lines as Vauban, and with the same objects. He had begun doing so while the Chancellor Pontchartrain was still Superintendent of Finance. He came to see him and asked him to listen with patience, saying that at first he would take him for a madman; that he would then see that his views were worthy of consideration, and that finally he would be converted to them. Pontchartrain, who was hot-tempered and plagued to death by amateur advisers, laughed, replied curtly that he would not go beyond the first stage; and turned his back on him.

Boisguilbert, undeterred by this rebuff, went back to Rouen and worked indefatigably at his system, which was almost the same as Vauban's, although they had no acquaintance with each other. He expounded it in a very learned and exhaustive book, showing how it was possible to relieve the people of a great portion of their burdens, and at the same time, by causing the taxes to be collected directly by the Government, to give the King as great a revenue as he now enjoyed. But such a system would have swept the tax-farmers out of existence, and struck a deadly blow at the power of the Intendants and the supreme dominion of the Minister of Finance; it was as displeasing to all such, as it was satisfactory to persons with no private interests to maintain. Chamillart, however, who had by this time taken Pontchartrain's place, examined the book, and thought it worthy of consideration. He sent for Boisguilbert to L'Étang two or three times, and went into the subject with him; like an upright Minister, seeking only the public welfare.

At the same time Vauban was struck by the book, and, as he thought only of the public good, and was entirely devoid of jealousy, he sought out Boisguilbert, and they compared the conclusions they had come to. They agreed on most points, but not on all. Boisguilbert wished to retain some duties on imports, after the fashion of the Dutch, abolishing only the most oppressive: his main object was to diminish the enormous cost of collection, which ruined the people

without any corresponding benefit to the King, and only served to enrich a horde of tax-farmers and their satellites. Vauban quite agreed with him in this, but he went further : he proposed to abolish all taxes, with the exception of one, to which he gave the name of Royal Tithe. It was divided into two branches : one a tax on land of a tenth part of its revenue ; the other on the estimated income derived from commerce and manufacture—and this was to be light, for he thought industry, far from being loaded with taxation, ought to be encouraged. He published a book in which he laid down simple and easy rules for the collection of these taxes, and added an estimate of their proceeds compared with those of the present system. After a clear statement of the respective advantages and drawbacks of each system he wound up by a forcible demonstration of the superiority of his own proposals, backing it up by evidence which could not be refuted. His book was received with general applause, and was highly esteemed by all persons capable of understanding the subject, who admired its clearness, its acuteness, and the closeness of its reasoning.

But his system had one capital defect. It is true that it would have increased the King's revenue, saved the people from oppression, and enriched them by reducing the expense of collection to a minimum and taking out of their pockets only just what was required for the King's exchequer. But it would have ruined a horde of financiers, clerks, and employés of all sorts, and reduced them to the necessity of living at their own expense, instead of at that of the public ; it would, moreover, have cut away the foundations of those immense fortunes which we see accumulated in such a short time. That would have been quite enough to condemn it ; but that was not all. Vauban's crime was that his system would have destroyed the authority and fortune of the Controller-General, and in a proportionate degree those of the Intendants of provinces, their secretaries, their clerks, their favourites, who would in future be powerless to help or to injure any one. It is not surprising that all these influential persons should combine to prevent the adoption of a system which, with all its advantages to the King and his people, would have been so ruinous to themselves. The whole tribe of men of the gown roared with fury at seeing their interests imperilled.

The Dukes de Beauvilliers and de Chevreuse were led

away by their respect for the memory of their father-in-law, Colbert ; for Vauban's proposals were far removed from his theories of government ; they were, moreover, deceived by the specious arguments of Desmarets, in whom they placed great confidence, as Colbert's nephew and disciple. Chamillart, though he had consented to confer with Boisguilbert, was also led away by Desmarets. The Chancellor, who could not forget that he had himself been Controller-General of Finance, was strongly opposed to the new proposals. In short, on Vauban's side there were only two classes, alike disinterested and impotent, I mean the Church and the nobility ; as for the common people, who would have gained everything by his system, they never knew that their salvation had been so near at hand.

Surrounded as he was by prejudiced persons, it is not surprising that the King should have given Marshal Vauban a very unfavourable reception when he came to present his book, which was written throughout in the form of an address to him. From that day his military services, his virtue, zeal, and capacity were all forgotten ; the King saw in him only a madman led away by his love of the public welfare, and a criminal who wished to undermine the authority of his Ministers, and, consequently, his own. He said so openly, without any reserve. The unfortunate Marshal could not survive the loss of the favour of a master whom he had tried to serve. He died a few months later, having shut up himself completely, consumed by a grief which nothing could console. The King behaved with great insensibility : he affected not to be aware of the death of his illustrious servant. But that did not prevent Marshal Vauban from receiving the just homage of Europe, even of our enemies, nor was he the less regretted in France by every one who was not a financier or a financier's satellite.

Boisguilbert, who ought to have taken warning by his fate, could not contain himself. One of the strongest objections brought by Chamillart against his proposals was the difficulty of making changes in the midst of war. He therefore published a small book in which he demonstrated that M. de Sully, having been entrusted with the finances by Henry IV, and being convinced that the system was bad, had altered it completely in the midst of a war quite as serious as the one in which we were now engaged, with the best results ; then, giving vent to his indignation, he

denounced a great number of abuses, beginning each sentence with: "Are we to await the end of the war to?" etc. This completed the exasperation of the Ministers, already furious at being reminded of the Duke de Sully, a great nobleman, who understood finance better than the whole tribe of the gown and pen.

Their vengeance was not long delayed. Boisguilbert was banished to Auvergne. All his little income depended on his office; ceasing to perform its duties, he lost everything. He did not lose his tranquillity, being perhaps more sensible of the honour of being banished for having laboured for the public good than of his pecuniary loss. His relations, however, were more alarmed, and did what they could to avert the blow. La Vrillière, who had Normandy in his department, behaved with generosity; he kept back the *lettre de cachet* for some days, and then obtained, as a favour to Boisguilbert, that he should simply take the journey to Auvergne, and, having satisfied the King by his obedience, should be at once recalled. But when La Vrillière applied for his recall, the King's answer was that Chamillart was not yet appeased.

I had made the acquaintance of Boisguilbert and his brother at the time when I had the lawsuit at Rouen, which I gained. I spoke to Chamillart on his behalf, but in vain; it was not till Boisguilbert had been kept in Auvergne for two months that I obtained his recall. Even then he was suspended from all his functions; but the suspension did not last long, and he was amply consoled by the crowd of people who received him with acclamations.

I must do Chamillart the justice to say that he did try the new system on a small scale, selecting for the experiment a district near Chartres, in the Intendancy of Orleans, which was under Bouville. Bullion had a property there, and his wife caused his tenants to be assessed below their real incomes. That wrecked the experiment completely, for its success depended entirely on the justice of the assessment. The result was that what Chamillart had done with the best intentions was turned to poison, and gave additional force to the enemies of the system.

The experiment was therefore abandoned, but the suggestion of a 10 per cent. property tax was not forgotten. Some time afterwards it was imposed, not as the only tax according to Marshal Vauban's suggestion, but on all kinds

of property in addition to the other taxes. It has always been renewed since on the outbreak of war ; and even in time of peace the King levies it on all salaries, wages, and pensions. Such are the consequences of good intentions in France. How could Marshal Vauban foresee that the only result of his labour for the relief of the people would be the imposition of an additional tax ; harsher, more intolerable, and more permanent than all the others ? It is a terrible lesson, and one which may well prevent any one from offering suggestions in matters relating to taxation and finance.

A man of far higher birth than Marshal Vauban, but very inferior to him in all other respects, died about the same time ; I mean M. de Lusignan, descended from Simon, the fourth son of Hugues VII, *seigneur* of Lusignan about the year 1100. They were already very great nobles at that time, though it was not till afterwards that the family acquired the crowns of Cyprus and Jerusalem. This branch was the only one left of that illustrious house ; and the only surviving members were this M. de Lusignan, his brother the Bishop of Rodez, and his two sons. M. de Lusignan was a very honourable man, and would have shown some talent if he had not been crushed by poverty. He had been a Lieutenant in the Scotch Gendarmes. Madame de Maintenon, who had made his acquaintance in the country at the time when Madame de Neuillan received her on her return from the West Indies, gave him some assistance ; but only in a very small way, as was her custom. His brother was a very extraordinary sort of Bishop.

Pointis died soon afterwards, famous among other actions for his bold and successful expedition to Carthage. He was a man of bravery and capacity in his profession, and worthy of the highest honours in the Navy. He had acquired great riches, and left neither wife nor child.

A strange event caused a great commotion at Court and in Paris, and greatly annoyed the King. On the 7th of March, Beringhem, First Equerry, had accompanied the King in a drive to Marly, and, having returned with him to Versailles, started for Paris alone in his carriage. It was one of the royal carriages with six horses, with two of the King's footmen behind, and a groom riding in front with a torch. He was stopped on the plain of Bissancourt by fifteen or sixteen men on horseback, who made him get out

and carried him off. The coachman returned to Versailles with the other servants and immediately gave the alarm. The King ordered the Secretaries of State to send couriers to all the frontiers, warning the governors to watch the entrances, because it was known that a party of the enemy had entered Artois and had not yet returned, though it had done no damage.

People could hardly believe at first that the First Equerry had been carried off by a hostile patrol; but he had no private enemies, and, as he had not the reputation of being rich, it was not likely that he had been captured with a view to ransom, especially as nothing of the sort had happened to any of the great financiers; so there was no other way of accounting for it.

In point of fact, he had been carried off by a raiding party. A certain Guetem, Colonel in the Dutch army, a very bold and skilful partisan, had made a bet that he would carry off some person of note between Paris and Versailles. He set off with thirty picked men, nearly all of them officers disguised as merchants. They posted relays of horses in various places; several of them remained for seven or eight days at Sèvres, St. Cloud, and Boulogne; some among them even had the audacity to go and see the King at supper at Versailles. One of these was captured next day, and made rather insolent replies to Chamillart, who examined him. Another was taken in the forest of Chantilly.

The great mistake they made was in not carrying off the carriage with Béringham inside it, and taking it as far as they could under cover of the darkness; in this way the alarm would not have been given so soon, and their prisoner would have been spared part of the road on horseback. As it was they tired him out by galloping and trotting. They had allowed the Chancellor to pass, not daring to stop him in broad daylight; and in the evening they just missed the Duke of Orleans, not thinking his postchaise worthy of their attention. Their design was, if possible, to capture Monseigneur or one of his sons. At last, tired of waiting and afraid of being noticed, they threw themselves upon Béringham's carriage, and thought they had got a great prize when the light of the torches revealed a royal carriage with servants in the King's livery, and a man inside wearing a blue ribbon.

Béringham had not been long with them before he dis-

covered who they were, and told them his name. Guetem treated him with the greatest respect, and spared him as much fatigue as possible ; indeed, he carried his attentions so far that his design miscarried in consequence. They allowed Béringham to rest twice, and to travel part of the way in a postchaise ; this made them miss one of their relays and caused great delay. The alarm had been given, and the whole country was on the look-out for them ; nevertheless, they had crossed the Somme and got four leagues beyond Ham when they were encountered by a detachment of Livry's regiment. Guetem, seeing that resistance was impossible, surrendered with his two companies. The First Equerry, delighted at his rescue, and grateful for his good treatment, took them to Ham, where he treated them kindly in his turn. He wrote to his wife and Chamillart ; and the King, who was much relieved by the news, read their letters while at supper.

The First Equerry arrived at Versailles on the 29th, where the King received him with great kindness and made him relate his adventures. The King was very fond of him ; but he was nevertheless displeased at hearing that everything was *en fête* at the Little Stables, and that fireworks had been prepared. He sent to forbid these marks of rejoicing, and the show of fireworks did not come off. He had these fits of petty jealousy at times ; he thought everything ought to be consecrated to himself alone, exclusively and without reserve.

Béringham obtained permission to take Guetem to see the King review his household troops at Marly, as usual before the opening of the campaign. He did more, for he presented him to the King, who thanked him for his kind treatment of the First Equerry, and said that war should always be carried on politely. Guetem, who was a clever fellow, said he was so astonished at finding himself in the presence of the greatest King in the world, and being spoken to by him, that he was not capable of answering. He remained about ten or twelve days as the guest of the First Equerry, to see Paris, the theatres, and the Opera, and was run after by everybody ; even persons of distinction were not ashamed to applaud his daring adventure, which might be called a gross piece of insolence. He then went as a prisoner on parole to Reims, to rejoin such of his comrades as had been taken ; most of them, however, had escaped.

This absurd adventure caused very stringent precautions to be adopted, which were carried to excess at first, and were a great impediment to traffic at the bridges and other passages. The hunting-parties of the Princes were also subjected to some restraint; but by degrees things resumed their ordinary course. It was rather amusing to watch the fright of the ladies, and even of some men of the Court, who dared not go out except in broad daylight, and thought they were in danger of being made prisoners everywhere.

The pride of the house of Bouillon gave way about this time to the love of riches. Count d'Evreux, the Duke de Bouillon's third son, had, as I have already mentioned, obtained through the Count de Toulouse the means of purchasing the office of Colonel-General of cavalry from his uncle, the Count d'Auvergne; but he had nothing to live upon, and neither his father nor Cardinal de Bouillon was in a position to help him. He resolved to plunge into a *mésalliance*, and convert Crozat's daughter into a princess by the grace of the King. Crozat had begun life as a clerk in a small way, had become treasurer to the clergy, and finally, by speculations of various sorts, had become one of the richest men in Paris.

Madame de Bouillon came to tell us of the approaching marriage, and begged us to call on the numerous relations of the bride—a strange collection to be allied with a family which claimed descent from the ancient Dukes of Guyenne. She gave us a list of them; we went to see them all, and found them beside themselves with joy. Madame Crozat's mother was the only one who kept her common sense. She received her visitors with respect, but quite quietly, saying that she did not know how to thank them for such an honour; and she thought the best way of showing her respect was not to importune persons so far above her by returning their visit; and, in fact, she did not return a single one. She never approved of the marriage, and predicted what would come of it.

Crozat gave a magnificent wedding-feast, and took the newly married pair to live with him. The Duchess de Bouillon used to call her daughter-in-law her little gold ingot.

The country was groaning under the burden of taxation and the enormous issue of notes, which were current only at a heavy discount. But, notwithstanding the general exhaustion, the necessities of the war had compelled the

Government to publish a number of financial edicts during the vacation, and as soon as the Parliament again assembled it became necessary to have them registered. Harlay, First-President, spoke with much eloquence on this occasion ; as he had no longer anything to expect from the Court he expressed himself more freely than he had ever done before. He dilated on the necessity of registering these edicts ; there was no reason, he said, why the Parliament should have any conscientious scruples about it ; the times were past when they were allowed to examine into affairs and offer remonstrances ; there was no question of inquiring into the wisdom or justice of these edicts ; all the Parliament had to do was to obey orders, bow the head, and register the edicts in silence.

A speech of such unusual frankness gave rise to a good deal of comment ; the First-President was warned of the stir he had occasioned. He wrote to the Ministers, and attempted to justify himself. His advances were apparently well received ; the Ministers caressed him, and the King himself was gracious. He returned home well satisfied ; but in a very short time it was whispered that this cynic would not retain his office very long. He held his ground for four months ; but at last, in order to retreat with dignity, he had to pretend that he wished to resign.

It was only suitable that a thorough-going hypocrite should keep up his character to the last. He went accordingly to Versailles and asked to be relieved of his office ; after the fashion of the generals of the Carthusians, who offer their resignation at each general chapter, but would, nevertheless, be furious if they were taken at their word, and indeed take good precautions beforehand to prevent it. But in this case there was no choice left to Harlay. He arrived at Versailles on the 10th of April, and went at once to see the Chancellor ; it may be imagined with what bitter mortification this proud, ambitious man, to whom the King had more than once formally promised the Chancellorship, found himself compelled to go to the holder of that office as the person through whose hands his resignation must pass. He took his son with him, in the hope that he might be appointed his successor. This son was a Conseiller d'Etat, and I shall have occasion to speak again of this specimen of another variety of Epicurean cynicism.

After seeing the Chancellor, Harlay had a private audience

of the King, before the meeting of the Council. He had prepared a farewell speech to the King, by which he hoped to touch his heart, and obtain his office for his son ; but this man, usually so quick-witted and ready of speech, found himself in such a state of confusion at having, so to speak, to conduct his own funeral, that he could not say a single word, and left the King's room more angry with himself than vexed at having to resign. He had the weakness to go back to the Chancellor and ask him to repair his omission. While at Versailles he only saw such intimate friends as he could not avoid (who themselves kept out of his way in future, seeing that they had nothing to fear or to expect from him), and returned to Paris with a heart full of bitterness.

In person Harlay was short and lean, with a lozenge-shaped face, a great aquiline nose, and eagle's eyes which looked as if they could see through a wall. He wore bands and a black wig sprinkled with grey hairs, hardly longer than the wigs worn by ecclesiastics. He always appeared in a gown, but a very short one ; his back was bent ; he affected an old-fashioned pronunciation and language ; his whole appearance was constrained, affected, and hypocritical ; he was false and cynical in his bearing, often bowing slowly and profoundly, always creeping along close to the wall. His manners were outwardly respectful, but could not conceal his real insolence and audacity ; nor, in spite of his prim and measured way of speaking, could he refrain from showing his pride, or giving way, when he dared, to contemptuous sarcasms. His talk, even on ordinary subjects, was full of sententious maxims, and always laconic ; he never seemed at his ease, and nobody was at his ease with him.

His natural ability was very great and extensive, with much acuteness and knowledge of the world ; his acquaintance with literature was wide, and he had a profound knowledge of law and jurisprudence. In spite of his studied slowness of speech, he was wonderfully ready in reply ; his repartees were inimitably quick and witty, and went straight to the mark. He surpassed the cleverest lawyers in the art of managing the law-courts, and he had the faculty of governing men to such a degree that the Parliament crouched before him like school-boys before their master ; he did what he pleased with that body, without the members

perceiving it; or, if by chance they did notice it, they were too much afraid of him to resent it. He could be magnificent when the occasion required it, out of pride; but the same pride made him as a rule frugal in his tastes, modest in his furniture and equipages, in keeping with his chosen rôle of a magistrate of the old school. It is to be lamented that such great natural gifts and acquirements should have been unaccompanied by the slightest tincture of virtue, and consecrated only to ambition, avarice, and evil. Haughty as he was, venomous, malicious, mean and servile when his objects required it, false and hypocritical in all his actions, he nevertheless administered justice with the utmost precision between suitors of low degree; but where his interests or passions were concerned, he was most artfully and flagrantly unjust, and always ready to trim his sails to the breeze of court favour.

We have seen a strange proof of this in the affair of M. de Luxembourg. Some time after judgement had been delivered, in which, owing to our successful objection to him, he had no share, the King asked him what was his opinion about the matter. He replied that the Dukes had both reason and law on their side, and that he had always thought so. Could he dishonour himself more completely than by making such a speech, after his conduct throughout the case? We have also seen how he appropriated the money which his friend Ruvigny had entrusted to him. From these public actions of his we may easily surmise others which have remained unknown.

His corrupt heart was tormented—not by remorse, which he never felt, or at least he never gave any sign that he felt it;—but by a temper so bad that it savoured of madness, which made him the terror of all whose business brought them within his reach. He spared nobody, and his sarcasms were biting and continual. His retirement was looked upon as a public deliverance; and the members of the Parliament, in spite of their submission to his yoke, were as delighted as anybody to get rid of him. It is a pity that no one has compiled a Harlaiana of his sayings: it would have been extremely amusing, and would at the same time have illustrated the character of this cynic. I cannot refrain from quoting a few specimens.

Montataire, the father of Lassay, for whom Madame la Duchesse procured the Order in 1724, married a daughter

of Bussy-Rabutin, so well known as the author of the "*Histoires amoureuses des Gaules*," which caused his banishment for the remainder of his life. I knew both husband and wife; they were great talkers, and fond of going to law. They went to the public audience of the First-President. When their turn came the husband tried to speak; but his wife took the words out of his mouth, and began explaining their business. Harlay listened for some time; then, interrupting her, he said to the husband: "Is this lady your wife, sir?" "Yes," said Montataire, in great surprise. "I am truly sorry for you, sir," said the First-President, shrugging his shoulders with an air of compassion; and he turned his back on them. The bystanders could not help laughing, and they retired furious, without having extracted anything from the First-President except this insult.

When the Jesuits and the Fathers of the Oratory were about to go to law with each other Harlay sent for them and tried to arrange a compromise. As he was showing them out he said to the Jesuits: "It must be delightful to live with you, Fathers!" Then, turning to the Fathers of the Oratory, "And a great happiness, Fathers, to die with you!"

The Duke de Rohan, always hot-tempered and rough in his manners, was coming away discontented from an interview with him, and begged him not to reconduct him to the door; after some complimentary speeches, he thought he had dissuaded him. Under this impression he went down the staircase talking to his steward, and calling Harlay all manner of names. As they were going down the steward looked round and saw the First-President close on their heels; he made an exclamation to warn his master. The Duke de Rohan turned round and began making civil speeches to induce him to return. "Oh, sir," said the First-President, "you speak so nicely that there is no tearing oneself away from you"; and he would not leave him till he had seen him into his carriage.

The Duchess de la Ferté went to ask an audience of him, and, like everybody else, had to submit to his ill-temper. As she was going away she complained of it to her man of business, and called the First-President an old ape. He was following her, but did not say a word, and she hoped he had not overheard her; he saw her into her carriage

without a sign. Some time afterwards her case was called on, and decided in her favour. She hastened to express her thanks to the First-President, who received them with humility and modesty, making her the lowest bows ; then, looking her straight in the face, "Madame," he said in the hearing of everybody, "I am delighted that an old ape should have been of some service to an old she-monkey." Then, without another word, he reconducted her humbly to the door. The Duchess would have liked to kill him on the spot ; but she could not get rid of him till, with downcast eyes and in perfect silence, he had seen her into her carriage.

Two lawyers, brothers, named Doublet, had bought the estates of Persan and Croi, and assumed the names of Doublet de Persan and Doublet de Croi. They went to the First-President's audience. He knew them perfectly well, but all the same asked who they were. When he heard their high-sounding territorial names he bowed most humbly ; then, as if he had just recognised them with surprise, he said : "Masks, I recognise you !" and turned his back on them.

During the vacation two young lawyers went to call on him at his house at Gros-Bois. They were dressed in grey country clothes, and wore their cravats twisted and passed through a buttonhole, as was the fashion at that time. That happened to displease the cynic ; he called an upper servant to him, and, pointing to one of his footmen, said : "Discharge that rascal at once for having the audacity to wear his cravat like these gentlemen !" These gentlemen were very much taken aback ; they went off as soon as they could, making resolutions never to go there again.

His few friends and the members of his family suffered as much from his tongue as the rest of the world. He treated his son like a negro. It was a continual comedy to see them together. They lived in the same house, and ate at the same table, but never talked of anything but the weather and such trifles. If, as was often the case, it became necessary for them to consult about business, they used to write to each other ; and letters formally addressed and sealed were carried to and fro from one room to the other. The father's letters were pitiless, and, as the son had no scruples about hitting back, his replies were very amusing. He never went to his father's room without first sending to ask whether it would be convenient to receive him. The

father answered as he would have done to a stranger. As soon as the son came in, the father rose, hat in hand, ordered a chair to be placed for the gentleman, and would not sit down till he was seated. When he left, the father rose and bowed to him.

Harlay's sister, Madame de Moussy, did not see him more easily or with greater familiarity, though they lived under the same roof. He used often to speak so rudely to her at table that she was reduced to eating in her own room. She was a professed devotee; and her manners, in their preciseness and affectation, were very like her brother's. The daughter-in-law, a rich heiress of Brittany, was, in spite of her gentleness and virtue, the victim of all three.

The son had all his father's bad qualities, with none of his good ones. He may be described as a combination of a brainless fop and a grave, austere, and precise magistrate; he was a sort of madman, wildly extravagant and extremely debauched. He and his father claimed to be related to the Earl of Oxford, whose family name was Harley. There never was a family so absurdly vainglorious in every way, and at the same time with so much mock humility. The adventures of the First-President with the Harlequin of the Italian theatre, with Santeuil, and other persons, are well known; it would take too long to relate them here; they would fill volumes.

All the men of the gown who thought themselves of sufficient standing coveted this leading place in the Parliament. Argenson, that supreme Inquisitor, had made many friends in the exercise of his functions, and got them to make the most of his services. He relied chiefly on the Jesuits and on those who paid court to them at the expense of persons whom they accused of Jansenism. But he made a mistake. The King was accustomed to find out family secrets by his means, and entrusted him with many little secret commissions; he could not bring himself to part with a clever man who had shown so much dexterity in his mysterious and interesting duties. Voysin, backed up by his clever wife, of whom Madame de Maintenon was very fond, was the candidate whose prospects were generally considered most promising. De Mesmes, supported by the Duke of Maine and some confidential servants, also flattered himself that he had a chance. But the time for these three men had not yet arrived.

I hoped to obtain the office for Daguesseau, who had a great reputation in his profession, and to whom I was devoted on account of his conduct in our contest with M. de Luxembourg. The Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers had a singular liking and esteem for him ; but, to my great surprise, I found they would not give him their support. I therefore had recourse to Maréchal ; and also to Fagon, who was in a position to influence both the King and Madame de Maintenon. Fortunately he was already prejudiced in favour of Daguesseau ; more fortunately still, he never supported any one unless he really esteemed him, but if he could be induced to use his influence on behalf of a person, he knew how to use it skilfully. He did not refuse to do all he could for Daguesseau, but said he feared the suspicion of Jansenism which rested on him and his father would be sufficient to exclude him.

Daguesseau heard of my efforts on his behalf through his friend the Abbé de Caumartin, and sent word to me, with many thanks for my good offices, that, as he had no prospect of success, he should not like to be looked upon as a candidate. His father also came up to me in the Gallery and begged me to let the fire go out which I had lighted ; that was his expression. I persevered, nevertheless ; for I had a secret feeling of satisfaction at finding that my gratitude to Daguesseau was still as warm as on the day when he had given his opinion in our favour against M. de Luxembourg.

Lamoignon, backed up by Chamillart, and also by M. de la Rochefoucauld, who was very persevering when he had set his mind on anything, and who had been the means of preventing the First-President from having the Seals, thought himself sure of success, and strutted about as if he had already obtained it. But his comrade Pelletier had secretly obtained the support of the Sulpicians, with the Bishop of Chartres at their head, assisted by the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers. This influence, which in the eyes of the King and Madame de Maintenon had the merit of Anti-Jansenism in the same degree as that of the Jesuits, was too strong for the latter and their candidate, Argenson. Pelletier was as free from any suspicion of Jansenism as Argenson, and in his case the King would not have to deprive himself of services which he appreciated. Madame de Maintenon supported him blindly, for the sake of the Bishop of Chartres ; and she was backed up on this

occasion by the two Dukes, a thing which had not happened for a long time. Pelletier was therefore the successful candidate.

I must relate an anecdote which throws some light on this new First-President. A few months earlier he came one evening to Chamillart's rooms at Versailles. As usual Chamillart was at supper by himself, with some familiar friends round him ; and after supper he used to undress in their presence. Pelletier arrived when the supper was nearly over. For want of a better topic some one began talking to him about his son, now First-President, and spoke of him in a complimentary way. Pelletier replied, with an air of disdain, that his son had too much of three things : too much money, too much wit, and too much health ; and he repeated this more than once, looking round for applause, which no one was complaisant enough to give him. When Chamillart had nearly finished undressing he went away, leaving us in astonishment, and in the midst of a silence which was broken only by some very unflattering comments. The First Equerry and I had caught each other's eye the moment he made his remark ; Chamillart noticed it, and we stayed behind the rest to tell him what we thought of it.

Cardinal d'Estrées arranged a marriage between his nephew, the Duke d'Estrées, and a daughter of the Duke de Nevers ; and the Duke de Nevers died a week later. Cardinal Mazarin had two sisters : Madame Martinozzi, who had only two daughters, the Duchess of Modena, mother of James II's Queen and the Princess of Conti ; and Madame Mancini, who had five daughters and three sons. The daughters were : the Duchess de Vendôme, the Countess de Soissons, Madame de Colonna, the Duchess de Mazarin, who conferred her arms and title on her husband, the son of Marshal de la Melleraye, together with a dowry of 26,000,000 livres, and the Duchess de Bouillon. Of the three sons, the eldest, a young man of great promise, was killed at the combat of Porte St. Antoine in 1652. The third, when a school-boy at the Jesuits' College, was tossed in a blanket by his school-fellows to such effect that he fractured his skull and died at the age of fourteen. The only son who survived was the second, the Duke de Nevers in question.

He was an Italian, very Italian indeed ; very clever and witty ; he wrote charming verses, apparently without an effort ; he was the best company in the world, though he

cared for nothing ; indolent, voluptuous, and extremely miserly ; he often used to go out and buy his own food in the market, and kept his larder in his bedroom. His uncle had left him very rich ; he had many distinguished relations. If he had chosen he might himself have risen to great distinction, for the King at that time would do anything for the family of the late Cardinal Mazarin. He was given the command of the King's own infantry regiment, having previously been Captain of the Musketeers. All this, instead of pushing M. de Nevers' fortune, simply bored him. He followed the King to a few campaigns, but he did not care for war or military affairs ; and the Court was not much more to his liking. He gave up his posts out of sheer indolence and love of pleasure. He had been made a Knight of the Order in 1661, when only twenty years of age, and in 1678 was given a brevet of Duke, which he might have had registered at any time during ten years, if he had chosen ; but he would not take the trouble. Afterwards he wished to register it, but the time for it had gone by, and he was refused.

In 1670 he married the most beautiful person about the Court, the eldest daughter of Madame de Thianges, Madame de Montespan's sister. He often had very useless fits of jealousy, but never quarrelled openly with his wife, who was much in society. It happened three or four times that he went into her room early in the morning, made her get up, and start with him immediately for Rome, without any preparation and without any of his servants having been told what he was going to do ; indeed, he had only thought of it himself a day or two before. They made some long sojourns at Rome.

He had two sons and two daughters. The elder daughter married the Prince de Chimay, Knight of the Golden Fleece and Grandee of Spain, who afterwards became my son-in-law ; the younger was the Duchess d'Estrées. Neither of them had children. The two sons were M. de Donzi, who was always on bad terms with his father, and M. Mancini, who inherited the Italian property. I shall have occasion to speak of them again. The Duke de Nevers had retained the governorship of the Nivernais, because nearly the whole district belonged to him. His son, who had offended the King by negligent service with the army and in other ways, was not allowed to succeed him in that office. He dared

not assume the title of Nevers, but after his father's death ventured to call himself Duke de Donzi. The King was much displeased, and sent him an order to drop the title of Duke and all marks of that dignity. His father had been merely a brevet-Duke, and as his title had not been registered it did not pass to his son. The son, through the influence of his aunt, the Duchess Sforza, was made a Duke and Peer under the Regency.

I perceive that I have not yet spoken of what the Court called the "parvulos" of Meudon; and it is necessary that I should explain what they were, otherwise some important matters which I shall have to relate would be unintelligible. We have seen who Mademoiselle Choin was, and the reason why she was dismissed by the Princess of Conti. Monseigneur's affection for her was only increased by the difficulty of meeting her. Madame de Lislebonne and her daughters were almost the only confidants of this attachment; in spite of all that the Princess of Conti had done for them, they encouraged the *liaison* between Monseigneur and Mademoiselle Choin, for by its means they were admitted to a confidential intimacy with him, from which they hoped great things in time to come.

Mademoiselle Choin had retired to Paris, to the house of her relation Lacroix, Receiver-General of Finance, where she lived in great privacy. On the rare occasions when Monseigneur went to dine at Meudon, without sleeping there, in order to look after his building or planting, she always received notice beforehand. She used to go there in a hired carriage the night before, and cross the courtyards on foot, plainly dressed, so as to be taken for a woman of the people going to see some servant at Meudon. She was let in by a back door, and went to an *entresol* of Monseigneur's private rooms, where he spent a few hours with her. Afterwards, she used to go to Meudon in the same way, but accompanied by a maid, on the evening before any day when Monseigneur went there for a visit. She saw nobody there but himself, and remained shut up in the *entresol* with her maid; their food was brought to them by a confidential servant.

After a time Dumont was allowed to see her; then the daughters of Madame de Lislebonne, when any ladies went to Meudon. By degrees the circle was enlarged, and a few favoured courtiers were admitted; such as Sainte-Maure, the Count de Roucy, two or three ladies, and, quite at the

end of his life, the Prince of Conti. Then the Duke of Burgundy, the Duke of Berry, and, soon afterwards, the Duchess of Burgundy, were introduced to the *entresol*, and the affair became a mere stage-mystery. The Duke de Noailles and his sisters were admitted. Monseigneur often went to dine there with Madame de Lislebonne's daughters, Madame la Duchesse, and a few very intimate friends of both sexes; but the privilege was not extended any further, and the affectation of mystery was still kept up. It was these secret parties which were known as the "parvulos"; they occurred rather frequently.

By this time Mademoiselle Choin only went to the *entresol* for the greater convenience of Monseigneur. She slept in the great suite of rooms used by the Duchess of Burgundy when the King went to Meudon, and in the same bed. She always sat in an arm-chair in Monseigneur's presence, while the Duchess of Burgundy had a *tabouret*; Mademoiselle Choin never rose for her, and spoke of her, before Monseigneur and everybody, simply as "the Duchess of Burgundy."¹ Altogether she behaved to her just like Madame de Maintenon, except that she did not call her "darling," nor did the Princess call her "aunt"; but the Princess was not nearly so much at ease there as she was with the King and Madame de Maintenon. The Duke of Burgundy was also under great constraint; he did not find the society of that circle at all congenial; but the Duke of Berry, who was not so rigid in his morals, got on capitally with them. Madame la Duchesse was the leading spirit there, and some of her favourite ladies were sometimes allowed to accompany her. Mademoiselle Choin, however, never appeared in public. On feast-days she used to go to hear Mass in the chapel at six in the morning, her face carefully veiled; but otherwise she never left her rooms, or the *entresol*, except to go from one room to the other: and strict precautions were taken to prevent any one meeting her.

She was looked upon as holding the position of Madame de Maintenon at Monseigneur's Court, and no plans for the future were designed without taking her into consideration. For a long time it was an object of ambition to be allowed to call on her at Paris, and her private friends were much courted. The Duke and Duchess of Burgundy behaved respectfully to her, and tried to please her, not

¹ Without the usual prefix of "Madame,"

always with success. She treated the Duke of Burgundy with the politeness of a step-mother (which, however, she was not), but it was a dry and formal politeness ; and it sometimes happened that she spoke to the Duchess of Burgundy in such an authoritative tone and so rudely that she reduced her to tears.

The King and Madame de Maintenon were not ignorant of what went on, but they said nothing ; and, though the whole Court was aware of it, the subject was never discussed except in whispers. This sketch will suffice for the present. It will be found to furnish a clue to a good many things which happened not long afterwards. I should have mentioned that M. de Vendôme and d'Antin were among those initiated into the mysteries.

CHAPTER XXIV

1707

The Duke of Orleans starts for Spain—He is allowed an arm-chair in the presence of the Queen-Dowager—Pretensions of Princes of the Blood—An anecdote of M. le Prince, the hero—Luxury in our army—The revolt at Cahors delays the Duke of Orleans—He arrives too late for the victory of Almanza—Reception of the news at Versailles—Friendship between the Duke of Orleans and Marshal Berwick—The Duke lays siege to Lerida—His energetic conduct—Capitulation of Lerida—Reception of the news—Jealousy of M. le Prince and the Condé family—Malicious joy of the King—Berwick created Grandee—Differences between the constitutions of Aragon and Castille—The King of Spain abolishes the independence of Aragon—Médavid's army withdrawn from Italy—Vaudemont and his nieces—Madame d'Espinoy a spy—The Duchess of Burgundy gets a good fright—Madame de Soubise—Her compact with Madame de Maintenon—The two sisters and M. du Maine—A dangerous coward—Madame du Maine—The Count de Toulouse.

THE Duke of Orleans set off for Spain to take command of his army. He stopped on his way at Bayonne, to see the Queen-Dowager of Spain, who gave him an arm-chair; he would not have ventured to claim one as a right, but took care not to refuse it when offered. He knew that Gaston, brother to Louis XIII, was the first Son of France who was allowed an arm-chair in the presence of a crowned head; that, following this precedent, Monsieur and Madame, his father and mother, had been given arm-chairs in the presence of James II of England and his Queen; but that neither he himself, nor the Duchess of Orleans, nor Mademoiselle, his sister, had ever been allowed one. But by degrees the Princes of the Blood have raised their pretensions till nowadays they all claim the right to an arm-chair in the presence of reigning Sovereigns. I must here relate an anecdote of M. le Prince, the hero, who was never accused of being backward in claiming all the privileges of a Prince of the Blood.

He was at Brussels, where, though in the pay and service of Spain, he maintained his superiority and precedence,

with the utmost haughtiness, over Don Juan, Bastard of Spain, Governor-General of the Low Countries, who always behaved with as much pride as if he had been a legitimate Prince. Charles II, King of England, had been obliged to retire to the Netherlands, where he was living at the expense of Spain. Don Juan took advantage of that circumstance and treated him cavalierly. M. le Prince was shocked at his conduct, and determined to give this insolent bastard a lesson.

He invited Don Juan, with all the principal noblemen, both Spanish and Flemish, to meet the King of England at dinner. When the King and the other guests were arrived in the banqueting-room they saw a large table covered with dishes, with a single arm-chair, a cover laid for one person only, and a *cadenas*. Don Juan was very much astonished ; still more so when he saw M. le Prince present the napkin to the King of England and make him sit down. The King asked M. le Prince whether he and the other gentlemen would not sit down to table ; M. le Prince, instead of replying, took a napkin and stood behind the arm-chair in which the King had just seated himself. The King again begged him to sit down ; M. le Prince replied that, after he had the honour of serving His Majesty, there would be another table ready for Don Juan and his other guests. At last this polite dispute ended by M. le Prince obeying ; he announced that the King's orders were that covers should be brought in. They were all in readiness, and at the same time *tabourets* were brought in for everybody. M. le Prince placed himself on the one at the right of the King of England ; Don Juan, bursting with rage and mortification, took the one on the left ; the rest of the guests arranged themselves on the others. This was an action which did not savour much of any pretension to an arm-chair. It did infinite honour to M. le Prince ; and, after this public lesson, Don Juan dared not refuse to show proper respect to the King of England.

Speaking of dinners, the luxury of the Court and town had spread to the army, to such a degree that delicacies were found there which were formerly unknown in the most peaceful places. Hot meals were served at every halt during marches, and the repasts carried to the trenches during a siege were like feasts, with several courses, fruit and ices ; and all kinds of wine in profusion. The expense was ruinous to the officers, and the necessity of carrying so many things

about quadrupled the number of camp-followers and the baggage-train of the army. All this had long been a subject of complaint, even on the part of the officers themselves, but no individual could avoid doing as others did. At last the King issued an order that a Lieutenant-General should be limited to forty baggage-horses; a *maréchal-de-camp* to thirty; a Brigadier to twenty-five, and a Colonel to twenty. This ordinance went the way of many other sumptuary enactments. There is no country in Europe where there are so many excellent laws and regulations as in France, nor one where so little attention is paid to them. They are seldom enforced for long; it generally happens that even during the first year after their enactment they are constantly infringed, and by the second year no one thinks of them at all.

We have seen that the revolt at Cahors, by drawing off troops destined for Spain, delayed the departure of the Duke of Orleans for a week. This delay cost him dear. The Duke of Berwick was weaker than the enemy in infantry, and, being entangled in a mountainous country, he found himself compelled to retreat to the plains, where he could use his cavalry to better effect. Hasfeld, who had commanded on this frontier throughout the winter, had succeeded in feeding his troops, but with great difficulty: the surrounding country was now eaten bare, and it was for this reason that Berwick had sought to keep his army in the mountains as long as he could. The enemy's forces were a long way off; but they had assembled early in the year, and hastened up by forced marches, hoping to compel Berwick to fight at a disadvantage. Their army was commanded by Las Minas, a Portuguese, in concert with Ruvigny, known as Lord Galway, who commanded the English.

Encouraged by Berwick's retreat, they followed him closely, and in this way he succeeded in drawing them into the plains on the frontier of the kingdom of Valencia. Then he would have been quite willing to fight; but he knew that the Duke of Orleans, who was hastening to join him with all imaginable diligence, had already left Madrid. He did not wish, at the outset of the campaign, to offend the Prince by fighting a battle without him; so, though very much against his will, he temporised and hung back as long as he could. But the audacity of the enemy was much increased by the Marshal's patience, which they ascribed to

weakness; they resolved to push their advantages, and attacked him in his own camp. At the first onset our right wing was thrown into some disorder; but the Marshal galloped up and set matters to rights. The action was soon decided in his favour; it did not last more than three hours, and the victory was complete. This battle, which was known as the battle of Almanza, was fought on the 25th of April. The pursuit was carried on till dark. The enemy lost all their guns and baggage-train, and a great number of killed and wounded. We took over 8,000 prisoners, including two Lieutenant-Generals, six *maréchaux-de-camp*, six Brigadiers, and more than 800 other officers, with a great number of colours and standards. Thirteen entire battalions were captured.¹

I was at L'Étang, where Chamillart was giving a great collation to the Duchess of Burgundy, who had driven over from Marly, when Cilly, of the dragoons, *maréchal-de-camp*, arrived with this good news. I was much surprised when, happening to look round, I saw him; I guessed at once that there had been a victory in Spain. I instantly asked for news of the Duke of Orleans, and was much grieved to hear that he had not yet joined the army. Chamillart whispered this great news to the Duchess of Burgundy, and also told it to me in confidence; he then set off at once with Cilly to take it to the King. Madame hastened to Madame de Maintenon's room, and was in great affliction when she heard that her son had not been present at the battle. Madame de Maintenon's doors were besieged by every one who was at Marly; the King, transported with joy, came out and announced all that he had heard from Cilly. Bulkeley, brother of the Duchess of Berwick, arrived next day with the particulars, and was promoted to the rank of Brigadier. Cilly had started at daybreak on the 26th of April, the morning after the battle, and travelled right through without stopping at Madrid.

On the same day, the 26th, the Duke of Orleans joined

¹ This disastrous defeat cost the Allies over 4,000 men, killed and wounded, besides prisoners. The thirteen battalions (British and German) were not captured in the battle; they effected their retreat in good order, under General Shrimpton and Count Dohna; but next day they were surrounded by the enemy, and, having no supplies, were forced to lay down their arms. The loss of the British was very heavy; for the Portuguese at that time were not such good soldiers as they became during the Peninsular War, a century later, and most of them gave way at once.

the army, which was marching on Valencia. News came in that both Galway and Las Minas were dangerously wounded, and their army completely dispersed. The Duke of Berwick, with a strong detachment, went a considerable distance to meet the Duke of Orleans, rather uneasy about his reception, fearing lest that Prince should be angry at finding the business finished without him. It was another stroke of bad luck for him, almost as bad as that of the battle of Turin, though of a different kind. All his friends were sorry for him; and even the public seemed to sympathise with him in his disappointment. The Duke of Berwick's mind was made easy by the frank manner in which the Duke of Orleans congratulated him, and told him at once that he knew he had done all in his power to avoid a battle before his arrival. The Prince could not help feeling grieved at his misfortune; he had done all in his power to avoid it, and not stopped at Madrid a moment longer than propriety required; but he saw it was not the Marshal's fault that the enemy had attacked him in his own camp. The result was that there was no quarrel between them, and this campaign laid the foundation of a mutual regard and friendship which was never broken.

It was not that they were always, or indeed often, of the same opinion. The Duke of Orleans was enterprising and inclined to take risks, being convinced that many glorious opportunities are missed by excess of caution; the Marshal, on the other hand, morally timid, though physically brave, was cautious in the extreme. It would seem, at first sight, as if they were not likely to get on well together. But the Prince was the real Commander-in-Chief; and the Marshal's nature was so honest and loyal that, after having given his reasons for objecting to a certain plan, he would nevertheless proceed to carry it out as energetically and with as much good-will as if it had been his own. This is what the Duke of Orleans himself has often told me about him: and it is not every man who would deserve such testimony after having just gained a great victory. But the Prince always described him as a man thoroughly trustworthy, easy to get on with, and thinking only of the success of the cause; vigilant, active, and, when the occasion required it, capable of taking an immense amount of trouble. The Duke of Orleans has often told me that, though their military instincts were frequently opposed to each other, he had never

known a man with whom he would sooner be associated in war than Berwick. To my mind, it is high praise for both of them.

Before the Duke of Orleans started with the army he gave me a private cipher, and we wrote to each other in it; ciphering and deciphering the letters ourselves. I wrote to him suggesting that he should reap the fruits of the victory, though he had arrived too late to share it, by leaving the Duke of Berwick with a small force in Aragon and marching with his own army to the Portuguese frontier, where the enemy had neither troops nor magazines, and the King of Portugal was in no condition to resist. I thought that, having cleared that frontier of the enemy, he might, in the following year, carry back his army to Aragon, and so finish the war in Spain in two successive campaigns. What glory the Prince would have acquired, and what an advantage it would have been to the country if this scheme could have been carried out! Unfortunately, it was impossible.

The Duke of Orleans wrote back that my plan was excellent for an army which could do without eating or drinking; but from one side of Spain to the other there was not a single magazine, nor any possibility of providing for an army on the march; it was only with excessive trouble that the army could be subsisted in Aragon. Apart from this, the excessive heat which was now setting in would alone prevent my scheme from being carried out. He said he intended to take steps to remedy these deficiencies, and in the meantime to clear Aragon of the enemy, so that it would be possible next year to move nearly the whole army to the Portuguese frontier.

There was no reply to these arguments. In fact, the scarcity of everything was so great, even in Aragon, that it was only by miraculous industry that our victorious army could be enabled to lay siege to Lerida. The difficulties were so great that much time had to be wasted in capturing small posts; while Bay, on the Portuguese frontier, took Ciudad Rodrigo and other places with ease, and captured nearly 4,000 prisoners.

At last, after infinite trouble, ground was broken before Lerida on the night of the 2nd of October. Hasfeld, whom the Duke of Orleans has often described to me as the best Commissary-General an army ever had, looked after the supplies of food and ammunition; while the Prince himself,

disgusted at the slowness and ill-will which he met with among other officers, undertook to supervise all other details of the siege. He became an artillery-man, to superintend the moving of his guns ; and when the bridge over the Segre was broken and his communications were interrupted, it was his engineering skill which repaired it. The hard work he went through was extraordinary. He visited the works, especially the most advanced, by night and day ; and was indefatigable in seeing with his own eyes that his orders were carried out. He was easy of access, answered questions readily and with good temper, and, by distributing money among the soldiers and giving judicious assistance to such officers as required it, he made himself extremely popular with his army. In this way he inspired all his troops with a zeal and good-will which ensured the success of this very difficult enterprise.

Next to Barcelona, Lerida was the centre and chief rallying point of the insurgents ; and they defended it with the energy of men who had nothing to hope for and everything to lose. The town was carried by assault on the 13th of October, and given up to pillage for twenty-four hours. It was full of goods of all kinds brought in by the inhabitants of the surrounding country. The monks had taken the lead in animating the defenders, and were not spared. The garrison withdrew into the citadel, which held out till the 11th of November, when it capitulated.

The Chevalier de Maulevrier arrived with the news on the 19th and Chamillart at once took him to the King, though it was not yet eight in the morning. The King was so delighted that he sent immediately to wake Madame and the Duchess of Orleans to tell them. The army of the Duke of Orleans did not lose more than 700 or 800 men during the siege. Las Minas had resumed the command of the hostile army, and was threatening to interrupt the siege when the citadel surrendered. Galway's wound rendered him incapable of further service. After this long and arduous campaign it was not possible to undertake anything further ; and, though the Duke of Orleans wished very much to lay siege to Tortosa, he was obliged to put it off till next year.

M. le Prince was very envious of the success of the Duke of Orleans ; M. le Duc felt it to a still greater degree ; even the Prince of Conti was not altogether free from jealousy. They were especially annoyed at the taking of Lerida,

because the great Condé, bold and skilful general as he was, had been forced to raise the siege ; and so had the Count d'Harcourt on another occasion. I had the pleasure of hearing the King talk to M. le Prince and the Prince of Conti on the subject while at dinner, with a malignant joy which evidently found pleasure in their annoyance. He boasted of the achievement, expatiated on its difficulty, praised the Duke of Orleans, and said plainly that it was a great glory for him to have succeeded where the great Condé had failed. M. le Prince, who usually conversed so easily, stuttered and stammered ; and, as I was standing opposite to him, I could see easily that he was beside himself with anger. The Prince of Conti was by my side ; though he controlled himself better, he did not like the conversation, which the King prolonged. He said a few words now and then, so as not to remain silent, but left the chief burden to M. le Prince, who did not acquit himself well. This conversation, being practically one-sided, could not be kept up throughout the dinner ; but the King then turned to M. de Marsan, who was standing almost behind his chair, and began talking to him about the Duke of Orleans' success where the Count d'Harcourt had failed. Marsan was not so taken aback as to be unable to reply ; he endeavoured to pay his court by keeping up the conversation, and so renewed the annoyance and embarrassment of M. le Prince, who did not open his mouth, but looked the picture of impatience. I confess that this scene afforded me great amusement. It was much talked about at Court ; my only regret was that M. le Duc was not also present.

The King promoted Cilly to the rank of Lieutenant-General, and allowed the Duke of Berwick to accept the position of Grandee of the first class conferred upon him by the King of Spain. This King gave him lands in the kingdom of Valencia worth 40,000 livres a year, formerly an apanage of the Infants of Aragon. He was also made a Knight of the Golden Fleece.

The King of Spain, seeing the uselessness of his attempts to conciliate the people of Aragon, took advantage of the victory of Almanza to introduce some changes into the government of that province. Nothing can be more dissimilar than the systems of government in Castille and Aragon. In Castille the King is even more despotic than our last Kings in France, who have at any rate veiled their

supreme authority under certain constitutional forms. It is true that our King is the sole judge of his subjects ; that all judgements pronounced by his Courts are delivered in his name ; and that he can not only alter or revoke such judgements, but can, if he pleases, order any lawsuit to be brought before himself in person, or before judges specially appointed for the occasion. It is also true that the remonstrances of the Parliaments are merely remonstrances and nothing more, because the King is the sole repository of all power and authority ; and that even the States-General cannot assemble without being summoned by the King, and have no legislative functions, but are merely called together to advise the Sovereign.

The difference between the States-General and the Parliaments is that the former are an assembly representing the whole kingdom, and naturally carry greater weight than any judicial body such as a Parliament. It is many centuries since the States-General were reduced to this condition ; more especially, they have been deprived of all right of interference in matters of taxation ; the Parliaments have never possessed more authority than they have now. Nevertheless, there are certain forms which have to be observed in all matters regarding the Crown itself, or the principal persons in the State. It would take too long to describe them ; it is sufficient to say that Louis XIV himself, who carried his authority far beyond any of his predecessors, never thought fit to dispense with them, and went so far as to confess that he could not do so.

There is nothing of the sort in Castille. The Cortes, or States-General, never assemble except for the purpose of taking the oath of fidelity to the King, a ceremony which does not take more than a single morning, after which the assembly is at an end. For the rest, there is a tribunal known as the Council of Castille, and the President of this Council, who has no colleagues such as our *présidents-à-mortier*, combines in himself the functions of our Chancellor and First-President. He is the supreme judge of all causes arising in the kingdom of Castille and its dependencies, and is, moreover, the head of all the *regidores* and *corregidores*, who combine the powers of our Intendants of provinces, civil and criminal Lieutenants, Lieutenants of Police, and Provosts of the Merchants.

But all this authority disappears every week before that

of the King. Once a week, at a stated hour, the Council of Castille, headed by its President, assembles in the King's palace. Every judgement delivered during the week is submitted, with a brief summary of the case, to the Sovereign, who either confirms and signs it, or sends it back for further consideration. Sometimes, though rarely, he revokes the judgement, and delivers one of his own authority. He never inquires into the pleadings or procedure of a case, unless complaints have been made to him, or he requires further information. He merely concerns himself with the decisions. It may be said therefore that this Council, notwithstanding its apparent authority, is in reality an advisory body, and that it is the King alone who decides all suits and all questions. He often consults the Council before taking certain steps, but he is at liberty to follow its advice or not as he pleases. When his decision is once given it is obeyed without delay and without remonstrance. It would be difficult to carry despotism further, either in form or in reality.

In Aragon and its dependencies it is just the contrary. The King cannot alter laws, nor can he touch any privileges, private or public. The States-General are supreme in all matters of taxation ; they almost always reject innovations ; and no edict or ordinance of the King can be carried out, not only without their consent, but without their positive orders. The chief of this tribunal is in a very different position from the President of the Council of Castille ; he is called the Justice, as being himself the source of supreme justice ; he cannot be deposed, or suspended, nor can his authority be diminished in the slightest degree. It is in the assembly of the States-General that the King, on succeeding to the crown, takes an oath administered to him by the Justice, who, seated and covered, reads to him slowly and deliberately, so that every one may hear it, the following formula : " We, your equals, accept you for our King, on condition that you maintain our rights, laws, and prerogatives ; and, except on that condition, we do not accept you." This is a strange compliment for a crowned Sovereign to receive ; moreover, the people of Aragon have always kept their words when they could, and have very rarely failed to enforce them. The States-General and their Justice were always extremely jealous of any attempt to encroach on their prerogatives ; and the relations between them and the King bore a strong

resemblance to those between the King of England and his Parliament.

It is these prerogatives which have so often raised the people of Aragon and Catalonia in arms against their Sovereign; and the King of Spain took this opportunity of abolishing them. He suppressed the dignity and functions of the Justice; dissolved the States-General; declared the laws of Castille to be in force in Aragon and its dependent provinces, and repealed all local laws which conflicted with them; in short, he put Aragon in every respect on the same footing as Castille. It was a bold and useful stroke, and the opportunity was well chosen. The provinces of Aragon and Catalonia were furious; and have made frantic efforts to lighten their yoke, if not to shake it off altogether; but Philip V was, very rightly, inexorable; his authority was maintained by the results of the war; and the government has ever since retained the form which he then gave it.

Médauid was still in Italy, in possession of Mantua and other places; as all intention of sending another army to that country had been abandoned, he suggested two plans, the success of either of which he said he could guarantee. The first was to maintain his little army in Lombardy, abandoning such places as were indefensible, holding on to the strong ones, especially Mantua; keeping the enemy on the alert by aggressive movements, and forcing them to undertake sieges. In this way he thought we might await future developments, and in the meantime detain a large force of the enemy in Italy. His alternative suggestion was that he should abandon Northern Italy, and march with his entire force through the Venetian and Ecclesiastical territories, into the kingdom of Naples, which was still faithful to Philip V, but must inevitably fall if abandoned to its own resources. By this plan Naples and Sicily, at any rate, would be preserved for Spain.

But it was written that the blindness with which we had been smitten should become more complete than ever, and that the blunders of the last campaign in Italy should be crowned by the entire abandonment of that country. Médauid's first suggestion was rejected as being too hazardous; the second for fear of offending the Venetian Republic, which had openly sided with the Imperialists, and a feeble Pope who had not dared to oppose them. Vaudemont was therefore directed, in concert with Médauid, to open negotia-

tions with the enemy, in order to obtain an unmolested retreat for our troops into Savoy; and, as may be supposed, he had not much difficulty in arranging a treaty so shameful for France and so advantageous to her enemies. Médavid received orders to lead his army back to Savoy; and the Imperialists sent General Patay to accompany him as a hostage until the whole of our troops had arrived there safely.

All this was carried out with such haste that there was not time to warn the unfortunate Duke of Mantua, whose fortified places, with Mantua itself, were handed over to the Emperor's troops. He retired hastily to Venice, with such property as he could carry off, and sent his wife to Switzerland. They never saw each other again. It was at first intended that she should go to Lorraine, the most natural place for her; but the Duke of Lorraine dared not offend the Emperor by receiving the wife of an ally of the French, who had caused great embarrassment to the Emperor by allowing French troops to occupy Mantua.

About the end of April Vaudemont and Médavid arrived at Susa with their army, which consisted, including the Spanish troops, of nearly 20,000 men. On the 9th of May, the day after Bulkeley's arrival with the news of Almanza, Médavid arrived at Marly, and was well received by the King. The governorship of Nivernais was vacant; the King gave it at once to Médavid, though he already had that of Dunkirk; but it is true that he had purchased the latter. After a month's stay he was sent back to command in chief in Savoy and Dauphiné, with a pension of 12,000 livres. The King told him it was only an instalment of what he meant to do for him, because he had thought the government of Nivernais was worth 30,000 livres a year, whereas he found it was worth only 12,000. These favours were applauded by everybody, and envied by none, a very unusual thing.

The Prince de Vaudemont arrived very soon after Médavid. He was met some leagues from Paris by his nieces, Mademoiselle de Lislebonne and Madame d'Espinoy, who took him to the house of his sister, Madame de Lislebonne. This house, known as the Hôtel de Mayenne, is dear to the family of Lorraine as having belonged to the famous chief of the League, whose arms and inscription they have carefully preserved over the door. It was in a room of this house that the last horrors of the League were planned—the assassination of Henry III; the marriage between the Duke of

Mayenne's son and the Infanta of Spain ; and their proclamation as King and Queen of France, to the exclusion of Henry IV and the House of Bourbon. It is still called the Chamber of the League, and the family of Lorraine have kept it unaltered as a mark of their love and veneration. It was here that, on the pretext of requiring rest, Vaudemont arranged his plans for the future in concert with his sister and nieces.

We have seen how perfidiously Vaudemont had acted in Italy while Cattinat, and Villeroy after him, commanded there. He had concealed his treachery better under Vendôme, with whom he wished to stand well. The death of his only son seemed to break the ties which bound him to the Imperialists ; and the Duke of Orleans, who kept a sharp eye on him during his short stay in Italy, told me on his return that he was well satisfied with him. For my own part I never could get over the matter of the captured despatch, when he denied having the key to the cipher, the want of which proved so fatal ; it seems to me impossible that he should not have had it. But it is probable that, even if he had not made up his mind to return to his allegiance, the Government of the Milanese in its mutilated condition, and the nominal command of a small abandoned army, seemed to him no longer worth keeping. He felt that his position in France was assured, and expected great things from it ; the result showed that he was not mistaken.

I must here remind my readers of what I have formerly said of this bastard of Charles IV, Duke of Lorraine, whose ability, artifice, and perfidy he had inherited. If one could believe the silly fables of metempsychosis, one could not doubt that the spirit of the famous Proteus had animated his body. I must also call to mind what I have said about his two nieces, their brilliant position at Court, and their close union with their clever mother. Vaudemont now made a fourth in this family alliance : he had kept up a constant correspondence with his nieces, and they were now united to him not only by their schemes for the future, but by solid interests ; for since the death of Vaudemont's son they had become his heiresses.

The King did the honours of Marly for Vaudemont as he had been pleased to do for the Princess des Ursins. He had to deal with a man who understood how to reply, to exclaim, and to admire ; sometimes with coarse flattery,

sometimes with delicacy, but always with the same artifice. The King ordered the First Equerry to provide a light carriage with relays of horses, so that Vaudemont might accompany him out hunting, and often caused his own carriage to pull up alongside of it; in short, it was the reception of Madame des Ursins over again. All that was very well in its way; but what Vaudemont and his family wanted was rank and some solid advantages.

Madame de Lislebonne was very clever, and, if she had lived in the times of the League, would have played an important part in the schemes of her family. Her elder daughter, with an outward appearance of tranquillity and indifference, could conceive wide and far-reaching designs; and she had the capacity and discernment necessary to prevent their becoming mere castles in the air. She was very polite in her manners, but not equally so to everybody; naturally haughty and straightforward, she was capable of both love and hatred. She was cautious and persevering rather than artful; there was nothing mean about her, but she was sufficiently mistress of herself to stoop when it was necessary, and clever enough to do it with dignity; so as to make the persons she wanted to conciliate sensible of her condescension without hurting their feelings.

Her sister, Madame d'Espinoy, with less capacity, was supple, and not infrequently mean; not from want of pride or honourable feelings, but from stupidity. Her mind was altogether given over to scheming, and her politeness was more indiscriminate than that of her sister. She had an air of kindness and good-nature which took people in; but she was capable of serving her friends, and knew how to secure their attachment.

The appearance of both sisters was imposing; the elder, though without beauty and very simply dressed, inspired respect; the younger, handsome and graceful, was attractive; both were tall and well-shaped. But no one with any perception could fail to detect the savour of the League which exuded, so to speak, from the pores of their skin. Not that they were naturally malevolent; on the contrary, their whole conduct was such as to disarm that suspicion; but when their designs or their interests were involved they were terrible.

The natural bent of their minds had been strengthened by the counsels of the two persons at Court best qualified to

assist them by their character and experience. Made-moiselle de Lislebonne and the Chevalier de Lorraine were in such close union all their lives that no one doubted they were married. Through him the sisters had become intimate with Marshal de Villeroy, his confidential friend and very humble servant; and it was by the Marshal's good offices that the King, usually so jealous of Monseigneur's surroundings, not only felt no suspicion with regard to them, but treated them with confidence, and was glad to see the intimacy between them and his son. He always treated them with marked consideration, even after Monseigneur's death; from which it may be inferred that the two sisters, or at any rate Madame d'Espinoy, gave him the same secret assistance in managing Monseigneur as the Chevalier de Lorraine had done with respect to Monsieur. Marshal de Villeroy also procured for them the confidence of Madame de Maintenon; and I must here insert a strange story showing how far that confidence extended, though the matter to which it refers did not occur till later.

The Duchess of Burgundy had become so familiar with the King and Madame de Maintenon that she used in a playful way to turn over their papers in their presence, read them, and even open their letters. One day, when alone with Madame de Maintenon in her room, she began rummaging the papers on a bureau; Madame de Maintenon was sitting at a little distance, and called to her more seriously than usual to leave her papers alone. That was quite sufficient to arouse the Princess's curiosity; she laughed, and went on as before, till she came to a letter in which she saw her own name. In her surprise she read half a line, turned the leaf, and saw the signature of Madame d'Espinoy. Much startled by the little she had read, and still more so when she saw the signature, she reddened and became speechless. Madame de Maintenon was apparently not sorry that she should have made her discovery, for she did not try to stop her, which she could have done if she had really wished it. She looked up and said: "What is the matter, darling? What a state you are in! What have you found?" The Princess looked still more confused; Madame de Maintenon rose and went to see what she was looking at. The Princess pointed to the signature. "Well," said Madame de Maintenon, "it is a letter from Madame d'Espinoy. That is what comes of being too inquisitive; people some-

times come across things they would rather not have seen." Then, assuming another tone, she said : " Since you have seen part of it, Madame, read the whole ; and, if you are wise, turn the lesson to good account " ; and she forced her to read the letter from beginning to end.

It was a detailed report of all that the Duchess of Burgundy had said and done during the last four or five days, giving times and places as accurately as if Madame d'Espinoy, who rarely came near her, had not lost sight of her the whole time ; and there was a good deal about Nangis and various imprudences of the Princess. Everything was set down in plain terms ; and, if there could be anything more surprising than such a document in itself, it is that Madame d'Espinoy should have signed her name to it, and that Madame de Maintenon should not have burnt it immediately ; or, at any rate, put it under lock and key. The poor Princess almost fainted, and turned all sorts of colours. Madame de Maintenon gave her a good scolding, and showed her that things which she fancied she concealed were known to the whole Court. She impressed upon her what the consequences of her behaviour might be ; and wound up by telling her that when she had spoken about it to her on previous occasions it was on sure information, and that Madame d'Espinoy, and some other ladies besides, were commissioned by her to watch her conduct and report frequently and fully.

When she came away from this unpleasant interview the Princess hastened to hide herself in her private room ; she then sent for Madame de Nogaret, whom she always called her little nurse and the repository of her secrets, and told her the story, in floods of tears, and in a rage against Madame d'Espinoy which may easily be imagined. Madame de Nogaret let the first outburst evaporate, and then said what she thought fit about the letter and its contents ; but she advised the Princess most strongly not to let Madame d'Espinoy see that anything had happened, warning her that she was lost if she showed her less familiarity or politeness than usual. It was good advice, but not easy to follow ; however, the Duchess of Burgundy, who very rightly thought highly of Madame de Nogaret and her knowledge of the world, did follow it ; and Madame d'Espinoy never had the slightest suspicion that she had been found out. Next day Madame de Nogaret, who was an intimate friend of

both Madame de Saint-Simon and myself, told us the story exactly as I have related it here.

Such a shocking and disgraceful proceeding on the part of a person of the birth and position of Madame d'Espinoy shows clearly how close were the relations of the two sisters with the King and Madame de Maintenon, and how much they might expect from them; especially as Madame de Maintenon did not disguise her infatuation for the pretensions of the House of Lorraine.

The influence of the sisters over Monseigneur was unbounded. Mademoiselle Choin, his Maintenon in all respects except that they were not married, was devoted to them. She could not forget that Madame de Lislebonne and her daughters had thrown over the Princess of Conti for her sake, although they were indebted to her for everything—for their introduction to Monseigneur, for the foundation of their fortunes, and even, in the early days, for the necessaries of life. She was too well aware of Monseigneur's warm friendship for them to oppose them in anything; and took care to remain in close union with them. On another side, Madame la Duchesse, whose cheerful and equable temper and perfect health had constituted her the queen of pleasures, with whom Monseigneur had taken refuge when the Princess of Conti had driven him from her side by her ill-temper after the affair of the Choin, —Madame la Duchesse, I say, who was neither ill-tempered nor jealous, took care not to offend these three persons, Monseigneur's oldest and most confidential friends; for Monseigneur's affection was not a matter of indifference to her, even in the present, as it shielded her from outbreaks of temper on the part of M. le Duc and M. le Prince; and it would of course be still more useful in the future.

All four ladies, therefore, had a perfect understanding among themselves so far as Monseigneur's affairs were concerned, and in a good many other things. They always acted in concert; reserving to themselves the right of supplanting each other in the Prince's favour after the King's death. In the meantime, they kept in perfect subjection the few men who might, through Monseigneur's favour, become important hereafter.

The other person whose instructions were most useful to Mademoiselle de Lislebonne and Madame d'Espinoy was the clever Madame de Soubise. The Princess d'Espinoy,

mother-in-law to this one, was her sister, and on very affectionate terms with her. Madame de Soubise had far more capacity than appeared at first sight ; and with it were combined unbounded ambition, which she concealed as much as possible, the most unscrupulous artfulness, and a profound genius for intrigue. Her charms had initiated her into the secrets of the King's private life, and, as she still kept up some communication with him, she knew everything that was going on. She had even won over Madame de Maintenon ; she availed herself of the jealousy caused by the King's lingering attachment to her to propose to her a sort of compromise ; and the newly married wife was only too glad to consent.

Madame de Soubise agreed never to see the King in private except on business of which Madame de Maintenon should be previously informed, and not even then if it could be done by writing. If she had to speak to him about some unimportant matter, it was to be at the door of his private room ; she was to go to Marly just often enough to prevent people from talking ; and never to attend the King's private entertainments except when it would be a singularity not to do so ; and, though she was compelled to be often at Versailles and Fontainebleau, she was to content herself with paying her respects to the King, like other ladies, at his supper, and not be dissatisfied if he did not speak to her more than to others ; for he very rarely spoke to any of them. On her side Madame de Maintenon promised to do her utmost to obtain for her anything she wanted, either for herself or her friends.

This compact was kept on both sides with scrupulous fidelity, for it suited them both admirably. Madame de Maintenon was delivered from all uneasiness on condition of rendering services which cost her nothing ; moreover, she pleased the King by showing no jealousy, and acting in a friendly way towards a person for whom he still felt affection, and whom he always treated with favour and consideration. Madame de Soubise, on her part, was quite aware that she was giving Madame de Maintenon counters in exchange for ready money ; she knew that a contest between them must have ended in her discomfiture, whereas by this arrangement she reinforced her own influence with the King by the whole of that of Madame de Maintenon, instead of having the latter in arms against her. For the same reasons they

agreed never to see each other without absolute necessity, and there was a constant interchange of notes between them, as between Madame de Soubise and the King. Such was the solid position which Madame de Soubise had the cleverness to acquire in exchange for one which had become very hazardous after the King's access of religion had broken off their intimacy.

She was too clever not to perceive how precarious was the princely rank which her charms had obtained for her family, and her great object was to consolidate it. From the moment of the marriage of her nephew, the Prince d'Espinoy, she sought to unite herself with Madame de Lislebonne and her daughters, in order by their means to secure the support of the Lorraine family. Their ambition and genius for intrigue were akin to her own ; all three felt that they could be reciprocally useful to each other ; before long there was close union between them. This alliance was afterwards drawn closer still by their common interests and ambitions ; it lasted as long as Madame de Soubise lived, and was continued by her children, who were past-masters in her arts of intrigue. By them the two sisters were repaid with usury for the services they had rendered to the common cause.

Such was the position of Vaudemont's nieces at the time of his return to France ; they made him fully acquainted with it, and lost no time in introducing him into the society of their powerful allies and connections. They were very intimate with M. de Vendôme. We have seen elsewhere that Monseigneur's most intimate confidence was divided between him and the Prince of Conti. Mademoiselle Choin had done her best to keep the balance equal between the two, if indeed she did not incline rather to the Prince of Conti ; but her two friends, who had thrown over the Princess of Conti his sister-in-law (though without an open quarrel), were drawn for that very reason to the side of M. de Vendôme. Indeed the blood of Lorraine was not inclined by nature to attach itself to the blood of Bourbon.

That reminds me of a rude speech of the Grand Equerry, which threw a light on their secret sentiments. He was playing at lansquenet with Monseigneur in the saloon at Marly ; he always played high, and was a bad loser. The Grand-Duchess of Tuscany¹ was playing at the same table ;

¹ Daughter of Gaston, Duke of Orleans, by his second wife.

it so happened that she "cut" the Grand Equerry, and gave him a "cut-throat." He instantly banged the table with his fist, and bending over it said out loud, "The accursed family ! will it always be fatal to us ?" The Grand-Duchess smiled and grew red, but said nothing. The Grand Equerry raised his face from the table, and looked round the company, still puffed up with anger. Monseigneur and all the bystanders heard him distinctly, but no one spoke, though afterwards they talked freely about his speech among themselves. I do not know whether the King ever heard of it, but it is certain that no consequences ensued, and the Grand Equerry was as well treated as before.

The two sisters had no particular object in making friends with the Prince of Conti, for the only additional ally he could bring was Madame la Duchesse, and they were already sure of her. Vendôme, on the other hand, gave them the prospect of winning over M. du Maine, and his alliance was not to be despised. For this reason they united themselves as closely as possible with Vendôme, and particularly begged their dear uncle (for so they always called him) to keep on good terms with him in Italy, so that they might be able to reckon on him after his return. The dear uncle followed their advice with such success that, when he came back, he and his nieces, with Vendôme and M. du Maine, formed a very close alliance ; but the latter, as was his wont, kept his share in it secret.

M. du Maine was conscious that Monseigneur did not like him, and there seemed to be no better way of approaching him than by means of the two sisters, his confidential friends ; Vendôme alone would not have sufficed. The King was growing old ; Monseigneur's accession to the throne was drawing nearer ; and M. du Maine trembled. He was as clever, I will not say as an angel, but as a devil ; and he was like a devil in malignity and perverseness of soul, in the pleasure he took in injuring people and his incapacity for doing any one a good turn ; in his overweening pride, in his falseness, artifice, and dissimulation. He was like a devil, too, in his charming manners and the skill with which he could amuse and entertain, when he had a mind to please any one. But, with all his cleverness, he was a thorough coward, morally and physically ; and, because he was clever, he was an extremely dangerous coward ; for, provided that he could do it under cover, he would go to the

most terrible extremities to ward off anything which threatened danger to himself. He could also, if he thought it necessary, cringe and condescend to any meanness or baseness ; and, whatever course he adopted, the devil lost nothing by it.

He was, moreover, urged on by a wife of the same stamp. She was extremely clever, but her mind had been warped and spoilt by reading romances and plays ; she was so passionately fond of the latter that she spent years in learning parts by heart, and acting them publicly on the stage. She carried boldness to extremes ; she was enterprising, audacious, passionate to the verge of madness ; sacrificing everything to her object for the moment. She could not tolerate the prudence and caution of her husband, which she called wretched weakness ; she used to cast in his teeth the honour she had conferred on him by marrying him ; she treated him like a negro slave, and reduced him to such an abject state of submission that he allowed her to ruin him completely without daring to say a word. He bore everything from her because he was terrified lest she should go mad altogether. Although he contrived to conceal a good deal from her, the ascendancy she had over him was incredible ; and she drove him forward, so to speak, with whip and spur.

They had no sort of intimacy with the Count de Toulouse. Though far from clever, he was honour, truth, and uprightness personified ; he was as gracious in his manners as a natural, but icy, coldness of disposition would allow him to be ; brave, and anxious to do his duty ; under ordinary circumstances his natural good sense made up for his want of ability ; moreover, he took great pains in all matters relating to the Navy, both military and mercantile, and understood them very well. A man of this character was not well suited to his brother and sister-in-law. M. du Maine saw that he was liked and respected because he deserved to be so, and envied him accordingly. The Count de Toulouse saw it, but wise, taciturn, and cautious as he was, took no notice. He could not bear the mad freaks of his sister-in-law ; she perceived it, and it made her furious ; she detested him, and did all she could to keep the two brothers apart.

The Count de Toulouse was on very good terms with the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, whom he always

esteemed and courted. He was timid with the King, who took much more pleasure in the society of M. du Maine, the Benjamin of his former governess, Madame de Maintenon, to whom he sacrificed Madame de Montespan, a thing which neither of them ever forgot. He had been clever enough to persuade the King that he was absolutely devoid of ambition, an indolent lover of solitude, and the most simple-minded person in the world. Accordingly, he passed his time shut up in his private room, took his meals in solitude, avoided society, and made of this shy and retired existence a merit in the eyes of the King. He saw the King every day in his hours of privacy ; he saw him also (for he was a thorough hypocrite) at High Mass, at vespers, and at the *salut*, which he made a parade of attending every Sunday and feast-day. To Madame de Maintenon he was as the very apple of her eyes ; he was her oracle, and could do anything he liked with her ; and she thought of nothing but how to please and serve him, no matter at whose expense.

This has been a long digression, but it will soon appear that it was very necessary for a full comprehension of the events which I shall have to relate. These personages will be seen pulling the strings in important matters which could not be understood without the clue which I have here provided. The time is rapidly approaching when it will be needed, and the present seemed a favourable opportunity for giving this explanation. I must now go back for a little to Vaudemont.

CHAPTER XXV

1707

Vaudemont's ambition and manœuvres—He is snubbed at last—He recovers the use of his feet—The Bourbons and the Guises—I am involved in a lawsuit—Madame de Lussan—Her supposed relationship to M. le Prince—Doubts cast on its reality—Other claimants contest her right—The Court decides against her—She appeals, and attacks me—I publish a memorial exposing her—M. le Prince's polite behaviour to me—M. le Duc's enmity—The case comes before the Council—Madame de Lussan condemned to pay costs and damages—Anger of Madame la Duchesse—I remain on bad terms with her and M. le Duc—Death of Marshal d'Estrées.

M. DE VENDÔME and Vaudemont had passed through the same mill; Vendôme with the loss of more than half his nose, and Vaudemont with that of the bones of his fingers and toes, which were nothing but shapeless lumps of flesh without consistency; his hands were a most disagreeable sight. His disease had left other unpleasant effects which defied the skill of the doctors. A quack at Brussels had cured him so far as to enable him to stand on his feet and keep himself in his saddle. In other respects he enjoyed good health; even at his age he retained all his good looks, held himself upright, and had a very distinguished appearance. We shall see that he contrived to turn his infirmities to good account, notwithstanding their shameful origin.

He and his nieces were very busy with schemes for his future rank and fortune. While at Milan he had amassed immense sums, and, though he had lived in splendour, he had still a good deal left. But he was careful not to let this be known, in order to extract gifts from our King, and to pose as a man who had enjoyed a great position and lost everything in the service of his Sovereign. He was so well served by his friends that immediately on his arrival the King gave him a pension of 90,000 livres, and wrote to the King of Spain recommending him to his good offices.

Although the finances of Spain were in a very embarrassed condition, the Princess des Ursins obtained for him a pension of 190,000 livres. It might be supposed that with an income of 280,000 livres he would be satisfied ; but that was not all he wanted.

The Emperor Leopold had given him the patent of Prince of the Empire, which was his reason for changing his title of Count into that of Prince de Vaudemont. His father, Charles IV of Lorraine, had given him the County of Vaudemont ; which, though an inconsiderable property, has often been the apanage of younger sons of the Dukes of Lorraine ; the same Charles IV had bought from Cardinal de Retz the estate of Commercy, and he gave it to M. de Vaudemont. Cardinal de Retz, however, retained the use of it for his life, and retired thither in order to pay off his debts and devote himself to solitude and penance for his past life. After his death M. de Vaudemont succeeded him, and eventually resold Commercy to Duke Leopold of Lorraine, Monsieur's son-in-law, who allowed him to keep the income derived from it for his life. The lordship of Commercy, though in reality a fief of the bishopric of Metz, had by degrees become a sort of petty sovereignty. M. de Vaudemont proposed that the Duke of Lorraine should formally put him in possession of the sovereignty of Commercy, adding new dependencies to it to give it more importance, and that the arrangement should be made under the patronage of the King.

In the meantime, he sought to acquire some distinguished rank. He had that of Grandee of Spain, but that did not satisfy him. He could not expect any advantages from his title of Prince of the Empire ; and he had lost all his great offices. While at the height of his splendour in Italy he had more than once asked to be made a Knight of the Order, but had been refused ; and he was told plainly the reason of the refusal, namely, that by the statutes of the Order of the Holy Ghost no bastard can be admitted to it, except bastards of reigning Sovereigns only. It was in vain that he persisted, and tried to work on the King's pride by reminding him that he had the power of dispensing with the statutes ; nothing would induce the King to place a bastard of Lorraine on the same footing as his own. But though the refusal was caused only by this interest which touched the King so nearly, it was sufficient to show Vaude-

mont that the King would never take him for anything but what he really was, namely, a bastard of Lorraine ; and he and his nieces were clever enough to see that this bastardy would always stand in the way of his pretensions. It was for this reason that he devised this sovereignty of Commercy ; he hoped to cover up his bastardy in such a way that the King's secret reason for refusing him the Order might have less weight.

But he was not yet sovereign of Commercy, and in the meantime he had to appear at Court and in society. He dared not refuse to show himself ; so he decided to usurp privileges without seeming to claim them, to take certain liberties on the pretext of his personal infirmities, and, having gradually accustomed people to seeing them, finally claim them as his right when in possession of his new rank. He began by having himself carried in a chair through the small saloons as far as the door leading into the great one, a thing which was occasionally, though very rarely, done by the King's daughters ; and he only stood up when actually in the King's presence. He avoided going to the apartments of Monseigneur and his sons, on the plea of lameness ; except that, on his arrival, he went to pay his respects to them, as he did to the Duchess of Burgundy and Madame. Elsewhere he sat down on the first seat he could find ; and in the rooms at Marly, including the great saloon, there were only *tabourets*. He liked to sit in a corner, where the most brilliant company assembled round him, and he led the conversation. Monseigneur sometimes came up to him ; and Vaudemont cleverly accustomed him to seeing him remain seated in his presence. Soon afterwards he treated the Duchess of Burgundy in the same way.

This visit to Marly, for which he had timed his return, passed off in the most brilliant manner for him. The King showed him all kinds of attentions ; he was the man on whom all eyes were fixed, and he availed himself of the opportunity to feel his way and reconnoitre his ground. When the Court left Marly he passed his time more at Paris than at Versailles. At Versailles court life is more public ; people are not huddled together as they are at Marly ; and he found that his schemes would not be so easily carried out there. Moreover he thought, very wisely, that, having felt his way, it would be better for him to disappear for a time, so as not to wear out the King's fancy for him. At

the end of a month he took leave, and went to Commercy with his sister, his nieces, and his wife. The latter had seen nothing of Paris except, so to speak, through the hole of a bottle; ostensibly on the plea of fatigue and delicate health, but in reality because she was anxious, before going to Court, to find out on what footing she would be received there, and did not wish to commit herself prematurely to certain claims to precedence which she thought of putting forward.

Before leaving, Vaudemont assured himself of an invitation for the next visit to Marly, and gave out that he was asked. It was a distinction which it was important for him not to neglect. Three weeks sufficed for his stay at Commercy; his health was good enough when necessary, and his legs were never so infirm as to make him miss anything useful. Madame de Lislebonne and Madame de Vaudemont remained at Paris, while the uncle and nieces went to Marly. But before he went there another difficulty had to be arranged diplomatically. Madame de Vaudemont, being still uncertain of her position, wished to avoid the ceremonial of Versailles, and go straight to Marly, as her husband had done. The King thought the request absurd, and refused; but it ended in Madame de Vaudemont obtaining what was in reality a greater distinction, because the King thought it would be less marked than the reception by him at Marly of a woman whom he had never seen, and who lost no opportunity of pushing herself forward.

Vaudemont and his nieces arrived at Marly on a Saturday. Next day Madame de Maintenon got the King to consent to her meeting Madame de Vaudemont at St. Cyr on the following Wednesday and bringing her to Marly. The King changed his mind about it twice, which caused a postponement till Friday. On that day, when he went into Madame de Maintenon's room in the evening, he found Madame de Vaudemont with her, and gave her a gracious though brief reception. Next morning she was presented to the Duchess of Burgundy as she was starting to go to Mass; she also saw Monseigneur and the Duke of Burgundy for a moment, and the Princesses, but also very briefly. She was not entertained to anything like the same degree as her husband. She remained three days at Marly, at this time; but returned about a week later for a few days, after which she hastened back to Commercy very much dissatisfied

with the failure of her attempt to usurp some rank or precedence. She was a person who thought of nothing but her greatness, her pretensions, and the degradation of her position since her husband had lost the government of the Milanese. Her manners were stiff, embarrassed, and affected ; she made a great parade of piety ; in short, there was nothing amiable, sociable, or natural about her. In person she was tall and upright ; she tried to give herself an expression of mild dignity, but in reality it was prim, with a good deal of vinegar about it. No one took to her, and she took to nobody ; she was delighted to cut her visit short and go away, and no one tried to induce her to change her mind.

Her husband, more supple and insinuating, and admiring everything with the coarsest flattery, continued his manœuvres at Marly. In the saloon were three seats with backs, covered with the same stuff as the *tabourets*. They had come into existence by degrees. Monseigneur had the first one made, and sat on it while playing cards ; when he was away the Duchess of Burgundy used it, and afterwards another was made for her when she was *enceinte*. Madame la Duchesse ventured to ask Monseigneur's leave to have a third for herself in a corner, where she played cards ; but she was partly concealed by a screen. Vaudemont, noticing that the three chairs were seldom all used at the same time, began to take one in the mornings, between the King's *lever* and the service of the Mass, a time when Monseigneur and the two Princesses were never in the saloon. He sat on it while holding his Court in his accustomed corner, all the smartest people of the Court sitting round him on *tabourets* ; then, when people had got used to seeing him on it, he took the liberty of keeping it while playing cards in the evening.

This went on for two visits to Marly, and during the second he had the legs of his chair lengthened, ostensibly to make it more comfortable for him, because he was very tall ; but in reality to appropriate it and establish a distinction between himself and other people, for he did not retire behind a screen like Madame la Duchesse. Monseigneur sometimes came and talked to him while seated in this chair, sometimes the Duchess of Burgundy did so as she fluttered about the saloon ; he never rose, and after a time made no pretence of doing so.

When these two visits were over he determined to go and pay his respects to the Duchess of Burgundy, thinking that, as he had accustomed her to his remaining seated in her presence at Marly, it was time to claim the right of being so in her own room. He was good enough to be satisfied with a *tabouret*, and not pretend to more distinction than a Grandson of France. The Duchess du Lude, who was afraid of everybody, was dazzled by his brilliant reception, and was weak enough to consent. It was necessary, however, to inform the Duchess of Burgundy, who thought Vaudemont's request very singular, and told her husband about it. He was highly displeased, and the Duchesse du Lude's position became embarrassing; she had agreed to Vaudemont's suggestion without difficulty, and the interview was fixed for next day. To get her out of her trouble the Duke of Burgundy agreed to allow Vaudemont a *tabouret* for this once; but he determined to be present, and to remain standing himself. The interview passed off in this way, to the great relief of the Duchess du Lude, but to the infinite mortification of Vaudemont, who, instead of establishing for himself a very superior position, as he hoped, saw himself treated as a cripple, allowed to remain seated while the Duke of Burgundy was standing.

But, for fear of further encroachments the Prince thought proper to tell the King what had happened, and ask for his orders on the subject. While telling the story he could not avoid mentioning the backed chair at Marly, and Vaudemont's habit of remaining seated while talking to Monseigneur and the Duchess of Burgundy. This made the King angry and put him on his guard. He spoke sharply to the Duchess du Lude, scolded Bloin for allowing the chair to be made higher and reserved for Vaudemont; and, having made inquiries and ascertained that Vaudemont was really a Grandee of Spain, he sent him word that he was to have the distinctions appropriate to that rank, and nothing more; telling him, at the same time, that he was much surprised at his taking a backed chair at Marly, and still more so that he should presume to remain seated before the Duchess of Burgundy and Monseigneur, even though the latter had good-naturedly allowed it.

Vaudemont swallowed this bitter pill without making faces, and went off to Commercy. When he returned to Marly the frequenters of the saloon were surprised to see

him sitting in his old place, but on a *tabouret* which had been made higher for him; he also stood up whenever Monseigneur passed near him, and the same for the Princes, his sons, and for the Duchess of Burgundy. He even made a point of going to talk to them at the card-table and remaining standing for some time before he returned to his *tabouret* in the corner. He thought it better to submit and ask for nothing at present, in hopes of regaining his advantages when his schemes in Lorraine should have been carried through successfully.

I have dwelt at some length on Vaudemont's manœuvres because everybody at Court witnessed them, and, from pure negligence and folly, abetted him in them to a certain extent. They are a good illustration of the manner in which the rank of foreign Princes has become established in France; they cleverly make encroachments which are not perceived immediately, and then by lapse of time and force of custom convert them into rights; and so they rise step by step. I must finish my account of Vaudemont's attempts, so as not to have to return to the subject again; it will only anticipate my general narration by a very few months.

It was not till the beginning of 1708 that he arrived at the goal which he had proposed to himself. During the remainder of this year 1707 he dropped his pretensions. As they had not succeeded, he gave out that he had no wish to offend any one; the King, he said, had loaded him with favours, and he sought only to make himself worthy of them, and to be on good terms with everybody. Like other *Grandeės* of Spain, he added the ducal mantle to his arms (which were without any mark of bastardy); but he took care not to say that he was content with that rank. After the removal of his chair and his other failures at Marly he hardly ever appeared there; he played the cripple more than ever, as an excuse for not attending on ceremonial occasions; he sometimes saw the King for a short time at his *lever*, but, though he was always received with distinction, he was never asked to sit down. He made frequent journeys to Commercy, where he was building, and making roads through the forest so as to be able to follow the hounds on wheels; and this helped him to amuse the King and furnished a topic for conversation. But in reality he took the opportunity of these journeys to pay visits to Lunéville, where he was busy with his own designs.

He was there at the beginning of January 1708, when the Duke of Lorraine suddenly declared him sovereign of Commercy, with the consent of the King, but without consulting the Bishop of Metz, who was the real feudal suzerain. At the same time the Duke of Lorraine (I do not know on what shadow of pretext) gave him precedence immediately after his own descendants, and above the Duke d'Elbœuf and all the other Princes of the House of Lorraine. After this M. de Vaudemont did not doubt that he would be allowed to take precedence of the family of Lorraine in France, and that his new sovereignty would enable him to aspire to the greatest distinctions. Prince Camille, son of the Grand Equerry, had been living in Lorraine for several years; on the strength of the Duke's declaration, M. de Vaudemont took precedence of him there, and, having thus received the first-fruits of his new rank, he hastened to France to secure further advantages without giving time for consideration.

But the Grand Equerry was furious; he went to the King and complained of the injustice done to his family; he felt sure, he said, that the King's sense of dignity and justice would not allow him to submit to every caprice of the Duke of Lorraine, and that he would not ask him and all the members of his family to suffer such an affront merely to please the Duke and M. de Vaudemont. The Grand Equerry making these representations with his usual vehemence, and having justice and right on his side, got the King to promise that Vaudemont's position at our Court should not be changed in any way by what the Duke of Lorraine had done for him. The Princes of the family of Lorraine made a formal protest to the Duke, who refused to listen to them; but when the latter wrote to the King informing him that he had given Vaudemont precedence over all members of his family except his own children, the King replied drily that he was at liberty to do as he pleased in his own house. That was all the King said to the Duke of Lorraine, but at the same time he gave Vaudemont to understand that neither his new sovereignty nor his precedence in Lorraine would make any difference to his position at the Court of France; that he must be content with his rank of Grandee of Spain, and not aspire to anything further.

The rage and mortification of Vaudemont and his nieces

at this failure of all their schemes may be imagined ; but they had the good sense to see that there was nothing to be gained by sulking, whereas, by submitting cheerfully to the King's decision, they would gain his good-will, and keep the brilliant position they already enjoyed. Vaudemont cleared his head of chimeras once for all ; at the same time his legs became stronger ; he saw the King more frequently, and remained longer in his presence ; and the Court was astonished to see a helpless cripple suddenly walking nearly as well as other people. I watched his recovery with pleasure, and did not attempt to disguise my amusement. The King was pleased with Vaudemont's conduct, which relieved him from embarrassing importunities ; he treated him with more favour and attention than ever, but was careful to give him no pretext for further pretensions.

But all this did not appease the members of the family of Lorraine, who never forgave Vaudemont or his nieces ; the Grand Equerry, in particular, was very bitter against them. The affront which his son had received in Lorraine in being forced to yield precedence to Vaudemont made him the more angry because he himself had quarrelled openly with the Duke of Lorraine. It was, therefore, rather awkward for him to leave his son at the little Court of Lorraine, and yet he did not want to have to compensate him for the loss of the pension of 40,000 livres which he would forfeit if he returned to France. After a good deal of quarrelling, Madame d'Armagnac,¹ who was glad enough to get rid of Prince Camille at other people's expense, arranged that he should remain at the Court of Lorraine, on the disagreeable condition of disappearing whenever Vaudemont went there ; and that happened several times a year. This compromise was always maintained afterwards, and Camille, who was by no means amiable, or popular in Lorraine, remained there on this awkward footing for the rest of his days.

Although, as we have seen, Vaudemont was loaded with favours, and it was of such vital importance to him to preserve the distinguished position which he had won, still he could not remain faithful. He preserved his old intimacy with the enemies of France : and living at Paris, in a house consecrated to hatred of the Bourbons, passed his

¹ Wife of the Grand Equerry.

time in plotting treason with members of the family of Lorraine who were worthy representatives of the Guises. Barrois, the envoy of the Duke of Lorraine, lived with them : a clever man, skilful in intrigues, who pushed himself everywhere, and contrived to make himself a person to be considered. Vaudemont was treated with great confidence ; he and his nieces, with Barrois' assistance, had ways of making themselves acquainted with many important affairs ; and all that they found out was at once communicated to the Duke of Lorraine. If the matter was too important to be entrusted to writing they reserved it for one of their frequent journeys to Luneville ; though Barrois never stirred away from Paris and the Court, in order to avert suspicion and keep the thread of current affairs. From Luneville their reports were sent on to Vienna by courier ; and the Emperor's Minister at the Court of Lorraine consulted with them as to the best means of profiting by their discoveries.

I heard of these perilous intrigues through an ecclesiastic of the church of Osnabruck, who was in the service of the Bishop, the Duke of Lorraine's brother, and looked after his affairs at Luneville and Paris. He was a careless, imprudent man ; whenever he had time he used to spend a few days near Étampes with a friend of his, who was a neighbour of Louville's. There he made Louville's acquaintance ; they took to each other, and the ecclesiastic told Louville all that I have just related. He added that the Duke of Lorraine was secretly collecting large supplies of grain and other things, and that he always contrived, without arousing attention, to keep a considerable number of officers in his little territory ; ready to take command of troops which could be raised the moment the conjuncture seemed favourable. It was seen afterwards, when M. de Torcy was conducting his negotiations, how great were the pretensions of this Duke of Lorraine, and how tenaciously they were supported by the Allies. It was also made manifest with what artful dissimulation he had concealed them until the decadence of France, the result of our military disasters, gave him a favourable opportunity for bringing them forward.

Such is the gratitude of the House of Lorraine, which has lived so long at the expense of France and been so splendidly established there ; and such are those wolf-cubs so

skilfully drawn from the life in the admirable letters of Cardinal d'Ossat. Our Kings have indeed profited little by the sagacity of Francis I, who, when on his death-bed, warned his son, Henry II, against the House of Guise, which he confessed he had raised too high; telling him that, unless he found some means of humbling the Guises, they would strip him to his shirt-sleeves, and his successors would be stripped of the shirt itself. It has been no fault of the Guises if this prophecy has not been fulfilled to the letter. They have never missed an opportunity of doing all the mischief in their power to our Kings, who have loaded them with favours, given them rank, high office, important governments, and establishments of all kinds, and have uniformly shut their eyes to their secret and treasonable aspirations. Is it possible to conceive a more astonishing instance of wilful blindness?

In the spring of this year I had an affair which made a good deal of noise during the course of the summer. Besides that it had some effect on my after-life, it also influenced affairs of more importance than mine; and for this reason I feel bound to mention it, though its details are tiresome.

It must be remembered that the second wife of the last Constable de Montmorency was a Budos, sister of the Marquis de Portes, who was killed at the siege of Privas in 1629. Her children were the last Duke de Montmorency, beheaded in 1632; and Madame la Princesse, mother of M. le Prince the hero, the Prince of Conti, and Madame de Longueville. Her brother, the Marquis de Portes, had two daughters, who were consequently first cousins to Madame la Princesse. The younger of these sisters married my father; he would not take the elder, on account of her ugliness and bad temper, and, as she was extremely spiteful, she never forgave him. My father's only child by this marriage was the Duchess de Brissac, who died childless, and made me her sole legatee.

Madame de Saint-Simon and Mademoiselle de Portes inherited some property from their father, which was never regularly divided between them; the elder sister, backed up by her mother, always objected to a division, and threatened to leave her money away from the family if Madame de Saint-Simon insisted. As she had by this time given up all thoughts of marriage, the hopes of a rich

inheritance from her prevailed, and she was allowed to keep possession for her life of a good deal of property to which she had no right whatever. The first Duchess de Saint-Simon did not live long; Mademoiselle de Portes, her sister, survived her for a great number of years, and was very old when she died.

She made a ridiculous will, disposing of much more property than she really possessed. She left her landed property in Languedoc to the Prince of Conti, with the absurd stipulation that, on all badges worn by the game-keepers on this estate, on seals, and wherever armorial bearings were usually displayed, the arms used should be those of Bourbon and Budos, side by side on the same shield. The legacies under her will were not paid for a long time. As my sister's legatee, I demanded the portion which would have come to her through her mother, and my claim was so obviously just that none of the family disputed it in any way. But Madame de Lussan raised a new point: she said that the money which I claimed as part of my sister's legacy to me formed part of a fund with which she and Mademoiselle de Portes could only deal to the extent of one-fifth, and that the other four-fifths went to the heirs-at-law of Mademoiselle de Portes. She claimed the whole of this portion for herself, all the other relations having renounced their claims to it. It never occurred to us for a moment to cast any doubt on the relationship of this woman to Mademoiselle de Portes; we only sought to uphold our contention as to the nature of the fund in question. Conflicting judgements had been delivered by the Courts on this point in similar cases; but, on the whole, the weight of opinion seemed to be in my favour.

When the affair had reached this point, Harlay, who was still First-President, knowing that the case would shortly come before the Grand Chamber, and that I should win it in that Court, suggested that a judicial declaration should be given, in general terms, which should settle the disputed point once for all. He could not help advising that it should be settled in accordance with my contention; but, as he wanted me to lose my case, he contrived to insert a special clause, applying only to the dispute between Madame de Lussan and myself, and deciding it in her favour. All this was done so quickly and so secretly that

I did not hear it of till too late. I spoke to the Chancellor about it, but the thing was done ; friend of mine as he was, he would not listen to me, not wishing to be drawn into a dispute with the First-President. This declaration, with its malignant clause, was, therefore, no sooner suggested than it was drawn up and formally registered ; after which I had nothing to do but confess myself beaten.

As soon as the declaration was made public, however, the attention of other relations of Mademoiselle de Portes, who had not renounced their claims, was called to it ; they now put themselves forward as the real heirs-at-law, reminding Madame de Lussan, in legal language, of the *sic vos non vobis* of Virgil. She was furious ; not so much at having to disgorge the greater part of her spoils, as because she was forced to prove her relationship to Mademoiselle de Portes, and, consequently, to M. le Prince. She had always given herself airs on the strength of her supposed relationship to him, though she knew very well that in reality it did not exist ; and it was a great blow to her pride to be shown up in this way.

Her husband was a very gallant man, who had always been attached to M. le Prince and to his father ; he had been made a knight of the Order for a very brilliant deed which I have mentioned somewhere in these Memoirs ; but at this time he had become old and deaf, never appeared in society, and let his wife have her own way in everything. She was a tall creature, of no very distinguished birth, Raimond by name before she married ; subtle, audacious, enterprising, and a thorough intriguer. She got as much as she could out of the Hôtel de Condé, and made herself so agreeable to Madame du Maine that she induced her to arrange a marriage for her only daughter with the Duke of Albemarle, bastard son of King James II, who was always at Sceaux. This Duchess of Albemarle was soon left a widow, without children ; her second husband was Mahony, the Irish General who distinguished himself so much at the surprise of Cremona ; but the marriage was kept secret so that she might not lose her rank of Duchess.

To return to the affair : M. de Lussan's great-grandfather had married a Budos in 1558. But there were two brothers of the name of Disimieu, gentlemen of quality in Dauphiné, whose mother was sister to the Marquis de Portes and to the second wife of the Constable de Montmorency,

and who were consequently, like the first Duchess de Saint-Simon, first cousins to the mother of M. le Prince, the hero. That was a real and near relationship, very different to the connection claimed by Lussan ; and it was the clearing up of this point which caused all the bitterness of the affair. The elder of these two Disimieus had left only one daughter, the mother of the Count de Verue, who was killed at Blenheim, and whose wife was carried off by the Duke of Savoy. The younger brother had the Abbey of St. Aphrodisius at Beziers, though he had never taken Orders. For a long time he had a secret *liaison* with the daughter of a Colonel of cavalry named Salina, of a noble family established in Dauphiné for more than three centuries. He had several children by her, and at length married her, putting the children under the canopy during the ceremony in presence of witnesses, thus making them legally legitimate—a point which no one before Madame de Lussan ever thought of contesting.

The eldest of these children, armed with the formal renunciation in his favour of Madame de Verue and his other relations, came forward to contest Madame de Lussan's claim to the inheritance. As he knew nobody at Paris, he came to us for advice and protection against the chicanery and influence of this woman. She tried to make out that he was illegitimate, and that some of the deeds he produced were forgeries ; but failed ignominiously in the case she brought before the Grand Chamber. What annoyed her most was that Disimieu cast doubts on her relationship. She tried every quibble of law to elude the question and get the better of this unknown and needy provincial ; and that alone showed the weakness of her case. But in the end she had to produce her proofs. All she could show was some registers of deaths and baptisms and contracts of marriage, which clearly proved the marriage of her husband's great-grandfather with a Budos, as I have already mentioned ; but did not show that there had been any issue of the marriage. The great-grandfather had married a second time ; the registers of the births and deaths of his children mentioned the name of their father only, not that of their mother ; and the Court came to the conclusion that they were by the second wife ; consequently that Madame de Lussan had no claim to any share in the inheritance of Mademoiselle de Portes, and was no relation whatever to

M. le Prince. She was beside herself with fury, and, after having exhausted every legal quibble to upset Disimieu, she appealed against the decision of the Court to the Council.

Up to that time everything had gone on as in an ordinary lawsuit. Relying on the assertions of Madame de Lussan, the whole family of Condé had solicited the Judges on her behalf, and I had done so against her ; but nothing further. It is because of what followed that I have been obliged to tell the story at such tiresome length. I received warnings from all sides that this woman was furious with me, and was telling everybody that, out of spite at having lost my case against her, I had brought forward the bastard of a monk and a servant-girl to annoy her ; with many other impertinent stories which Madame la Princesse and Madame la Duchesse were good enough to believe—at any rate, they pretended to believe them, and repeated them ; so that the affair began to make a good deal of noise. I thought I ought not to content myself with simply denying her assertions ; so I drew up a short memorial, putting the facts of the case very clearly, showing up her chicanery and the falseness of her claim to relationship, and giving a plain description of this spiteful and violent creature, without mincing matters in the slightest degree. Every statement was so clearly proved that no reply was possible.

Before publishing it I asked M. le Prince to give me a short interview. I explained the case to him, and read my memorial, telling him that I could not refute the lies which Madame de Lussan was pleased to tell about me except by giving the plainest proof of her tricks andascalities. I added that, as M. de Lussan had the honour of belonging to his household, I did not like to publish what I had written without previously obtaining his consent. In reply he rather avoided the subject of Madame de Lussan, merely saying that he was sorry she had laid herself open to such a lively attack ; he added that he would willingly have offered himself as a mediator if there had been any possibility of a peaceable arrangement, but, seeing that was out of the question, he gave me free leave to publish my memorial, and thanked me for my courtesy in asking it. He was extremely polite throughout our interview, and I came away well satisfied.

I made several attempts to see M. le Duc for the same purpose ; but, as I could never find him at home, I asked

his friend the Duke de Coislin to tell him what I had called for, and show him my memorial. I took it to Madame la Princesse at Paris; she received me politely, but coldly, and begged to be excused hearing it read. I thought I ought to do the same for M. du Maine, because of the part Madame du Maine had taken in arranging the marriage of Mademoiselle de Lussan with the Duke of Albemarle. On account of this marriage I also saw the Queen of England, who received me very graciously; M. du Maine's politeness was, if possible, even greater than that of M. le Prince. As for Madame la Duchesse, I considered her so much prejudiced against me that it would be useless to see her; I sent her a copy of what I had written, telling her that from motives of discretion I did not call on her personally. Satisfied with having taken these steps, I published my memorial, and distributed it freely, speaking at the same time of Madame de Lussan as her conduct deserved. I was backed up by many friends, who did their duty well; and altogether the publication made a great sensation.

M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse were not to be mollified, either by my arguments or my politeness, or by the example of M. le Prince, who remained perfectly neutral and never opened his lips on the subject; they said all the nasty things they could about me. M. le Duc was urged on by Madame la Princesse; Madame la Duchesse, I rather think, by d'Antin, who had never forgiven me for being preferred to him for the embassy to Rome, although I had nothing whatever to do with it, and it came to nothing. Madame la Duchesse twice attempted to bring up the subject in the King's private room in the evening; and each time she was stopped by the Duchess of Orleans, who took my part, although I had not spoken to her about the affair. Another time, in the same place, she began talking to M. du Maine about it, and was not at all pleased with the answer she got from him, although they were on very friendly terms at that time; M. and Madame du Maine followed the example of M. le Prince, and remained neutral. Seeing the angry zeal of Madame la Duchesse, I thought it as well, by means of friends who were in a position to do it, to let the King and Madame de Maintenon know the rights of the affair; and also Monseigneur, with whom Madame la Duchesse was very intimate.

In the meanwhile the case was about to come before

the Council. Madame de Lussan wished to publish a reply to my memorial, which would have been lively, if not convincing; but M. le Prince, without my knowledge, forbade her to do so, and spoke to her with great severity. She was therefore reduced to circulating a few lines of manuscript, in which, with a great affectation of respect, she expressed her surprise and pain at seeing herself so cruelly attacked by a man of my merit; especially at the sacred season of Easter, which I was accustomed to spend every year in the holiest place in France. She meant La Trappe, my visits to which I concealed as much as possible; I usually went there for Holy Week, under the pretext of spending Easter at La Ferté; for that is a time which people often choose for going to the country.

I had reason to believe that M. le Duc had not disdained a share in the authorship of these few lines, and that the attempt to turn my visits to La Trappe into ridicule was his work. I thought it best to treat it with contempt, merely saying that futile declamation was no answer to the solidly reasoned memorial in which I had exposed the shameful conduct of Madame de Lussan; and that the fact of her resorting to such paltry trifles showed that she had no real reply to make. Nevertheless, I thought it as well to explain the affair to the Duke of Burgundy, who gave me a very gracious audience in his private room, when I read my memorial to him. The Duchess of Burgundy also took my part, and expressed herself as favourably as I could wish.

At last, after many postponements, the case came before the Council, and was decided unanimously against Madame de Lussan. All the Judges, without exception, spoke of the case she had set up in the most contemptuous and indignant terms; and, what is very unusual in the Council, she was ordered to pay costs and damages. She was waiting in Madame la Duchesse's rooms to hear the decision. Chamillart's daughters were at that time the smartest of the smart, and were always in the rooms of either the Duchess of Burgundy or Madame la Duchesse. My sister-in-law¹ happened to be in the latter place on this occasion; she was told that some one wanted to see her; it was a messenger whom she had sent to the law-courts to bring her the news of the decision. She came back laughing and jumping; and told Madame la Duchesse the result, in the presence of

¹ The Duchess de Lorge, Chamillart's second daughter.

Madame de Lussan and other visitors. Madame la Duchesse was very angry, and told her she need not show so much joy in that place. The Duchess de Lorge replied that she could not help being delighted; then, making a pirouette, she told Madame la Duchesse that she would not see her again till she was in a better temper, and came away to tell me the story. Madame la Duchesse sulked for twenty-four hours, and then was the first to make it up.

This judgement caused a great sensation; it did not, however, cure Madame de Lussan of her taste for chicanery; she tried to appeal again to the Parliament of Paris, but all in vain. I will say no more about this infamous affair, which I have only related at such length in order to explain how it was that I came to be on bad terms with M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse. After what had passed we thought we had better have as little to do with them as possible; and we gave up going to see either of them, even on ceremonial occasions. Madame la Duchesse noticed it, and made some gentle complaints about it; she said she did not know how she had offended us; it was true she had sided with Madame de Lussan, but everybody had a right to his own opinions, and, putting aside the fact that Madame de Lussan belonged to the household of Madame la Princesse, she had obligations to her which she could never forget. I do not know what these obligations were; perhaps they were not very creditable to either party. These complaints were purposely uttered so that they should come round to us.

Madame la Duchesse added all sorts of polite attentions to Madame de Saint-Simon at Marly, which were received with cold respect and brief answers; Madame de Saint-Simon was never the first to address her, and never came near her except at the King's table, when she had to sit next her. Madame la Duchesse also complained that when she went to see Madame de Blansac, who was ill, at Fontainebleau, and found me there, I had immediately left the room. It was not that she cared about us in the slightest degree, but these Princesses like to think that they are free to do anything to people or say anything about them; and their pride is wounded if one ceases to pay one's respects to them. As for M. le Duc, who led a very retired life—for his savage temper had reduced him to the society of an extremely small circle, consisting for the most part of very odd persons

—from him I received neither advances nor rudeness ; only, when we met, he bowed in a more marked and gracious manner than before. I had no precautions to take with the Prince of Conti ; he knew the cunning jade I had to deal with well enough, and did not scruple to speak his mind about her. I repeat, it will be seen hereafter that I have been obliged to explain how all this strife, if it may be called so, originated.

Marshal d'Estrées died at Paris in May, at the age of eighty-three ; like his father before him, and his son after him, he was the senior Marshal of France. It is most remarkable that three d'Estrées in successive generations should have been Marshals of France¹ ; that each of the three should have become senior Marshal ; and that all three should have been worthy of the bâton. This one had received it in 1681, eleven years after his father's death ; he had greatly distinguished himself as Colonel of the regiment of Navarre, and became a Lieutenant-General in 1655. One of his hands was mutilated by a wound received in his first campaign. Having incurred the displeasure of Louvois, when the war of 1667 broke out he attached himself to Colbert, who was engaged in creating, rather than restoring, the Navy, and was delighted to get hold of a man of d'Estrées' distinction. At Colbert's suggestion the King gave him the supreme command, and although naval and military warfare were totally unlike each other, d'Estrées soon showed that he was equally capable in both. He made a successful campaign in the West Indies, and repaired the damage done there by the English. He defeated the pirates of Algiers, Tunis, and Salée, compelling them to sue for peace, and distinguished himself in many subsequent naval actions.

Louvois was enraged at his success ; the glory obtained by the Navy was odious to him, for it tended to elevate Colbert at his expense ; he did all he could to prevent d'Estrées from obtaining the bâton of Marshal which Colbert, for the sake of the Navy, was anxious to procure for him. Louvois' influence prevented him from being included in the promotion which followed the death of M. de Turenne

¹ In one of his notes to Dangeau's Journal, Saint-Simon records the singular effect of a flash of lightning on the wife of the first Marshal d'Estrées. "Le tonnerre," he says, "qui tomba fort près d'elle, lui passa entre les jambes ; et, sans la blesser, lui servit si bien de barbier que, si l'on s'en servait en ces endroits-là, elle n'en aurait jamais eu besoin depuis."

in 1675 ; but he was made a Marshal, by himself, in 1681. Marshal d'Estrées was poor all his life ; but he was a highly honourable man, and much respected. He lived to see his eldest son a Marshal of France and Grandee of Spain, and his younger son, the Abbé, employed in various diplomatic missions ; but neither he nor the Cardinal could ever procure a bishopric for the Abbé. Some youthful indiscretion had caused the King to take a prejudice against him which he never got over.

A few days after the death of Marshal d'Estrées, the Marquise de la Vallière died. Her husband, who died long before her, was brother to the King's mistress, and by this influence she had become Lady of the Palace to the Queen. Her name was Glé, and, as may be supposed, her birth was not very distinguished ; but she was a very clever, amiable woman, with many friends, and she contrived to maintain a position of distinction in society and at Court after her sister-in-law's retirement. She had become infirm, and had taken to religion ; latterly, she hardly ever came to Court, but when she did make her appearance she was much sought after. The King, who had formerly been much amused by her gaiety and wit, always kept up his friendship for her, and treated her with distinction when he saw her.

CHAPTER XXVI

1707

Death of Madame de Montespan—Her husband's obstinacy—Her retirement from Court—Her conversion to religion—Still nourishes ambitious hopes—Her work among the poor—Fear of death—Her "watchers"—Her charm and wit—Kindness to Madame de Saint-Simon—She is suddenly taken ill—Her death-bed—Grief of her natural children—D'Antin—His character—Anecdotes of his cowardice—Death of Madame de Nemours—Her character—Her animosity to the Mattignons and Condé family—Omits a clause in the Lord's Prayer—Her claims to the Principality of Neufchatel—Death of Cardinal d'Arquien—His daughter the Queen of Poland—Death of Vaillac—Stories about him.

ANOTHER death occurred at this time which caused much more stir, although it was that of a person who had long retired into private life, and retained no vestige of the immense authority she had once exercised. Madame de Montespan died at Bourbon on Friday the 27th of May, very suddenly ; at the age of sixty-six years.

I will not speak of the period of her reign, which was before my time ; but I must relate one anecdote, because it is not very generally known. It was more her husband's fault than her own that she yielded to the King's love ; she warned him of it, and assured him that a certain entertainment which the King was giving was intended for her ; she begged him to take her away to his country place in Guyenne, and leave her there till such time as the King had forgotten her, and his affections were engaged elsewhere. It was useless ; Montespan would not listen, and soon had good reason to repent of his obstinacy. To make matters worse for him, he was in love with her till the day of his death, though he steadily refused to see her again after the first scandal.

Nor will I relate how the fear of the devil brought about her separation from the Court, after sundry relapses ; and I will take another occasion to speak of Madame de Main-

tenon, who, owing everything to her, gradually supplanted her, made her submit to the most cruel mortifications, and finally drove her away from the Court. It was M. du Maine who undertook the task of telling her to go, when, to the great embarrassment of the King, no one else would do so ; and it was the Bishop of Meaux who put the finishing touch to the good work. She went away in floods of angry tears, and never forgave M. du Maine ; but he won the heart of Madame de Maintenon by this singular service, and secured her all-powerful influence for the rest of her days.

The mistress retired to the convent of St. Joseph, which she had built ; but it was long before she could accustom herself to her new surroundings. She spent a good deal of her enforced and uneasy leisure in visits to Bourbon, to Fontevault, and to d'Antin's country seat ; and it was not for some years that she came to herself. At last God touched her heart. She had never lost sight of Him even in the midst of her sins. She would often leave the King to go and pray in her own room. Nothing would have induced her to break the Church's rules on fast-days or days of abstinence : in her most disorderly times she kept Lent with the greatest austerity. She was liberal in almsgiving, had a great respect for virtuous people, and never said a word which savoured of scepticism or impiety. But she was imperious, haughty, and sarcastic, and had all the defects natural to a woman whose beauty had made her all-powerful.

She made up her mind at last to turn her involuntary leisure to good account ; and, having sought for a wise and enlightened adviser, put herself in the hands of Father de la Tour, the General of the Oratory, so well known as a preacher and spiritual director. From that time up to the moment of her death she never turned back ; and her repentance only became stronger as time went on. She had to begin by expelling from her heart the attachment to the Court which still lingered there ; and by renouncing hopes, which, chimerical as they were, she had never ceased to cherish. She had always flattered herself that it was only the fear of hell which had forced the King to leave her ; she knew that Madame de Maintenon was old, and chose to believe that she was in bad health. She fancied that death might deliver her from her power ; and that, the

King being again a widower, it would be easy to revive the old flame. Then, she thought, having no more religious scruples to stand in his way, he might, for the sake of her children, allow her to succeed to the position of her old enemy.

Her children themselves shared these hopes, and were most assiduous in their attentions to her. She loved them passionately, with the exception of the Duke du Maine, who did not see her for a long time; and then only just as often as common decency required. As for the others, to say that she had influence over them is far too little: her authority over them was unbounded, and she used it freely. She was always giving them money, partly from real affection, and in order to retain their attachment, partly with the object of keeping up a link with the King, who never had any sort of correspondence with her. He disapproved of their attentions to her; after a time they saw her more rarely, and never without first obtaining his permission. She became a real mother to d'Antin, to whom she had hitherto behaved more like a stepmother, and employed herself in the advancement of his fortune.

Father de la Tour made her submit to a terrible penance. He ordered her to beg pardon of her husband and put herself at his disposal. She wrote to him in the most submissive terms, offering to return to him if he would condescend to receive her, or to retire to any place he might choose to name. To any one who knew Madame de Montespan this must appear a most heroic act of self-sacrifice. She had the merit of making the offer, without the pain of being put to the proof. Montespan replied that he would neither receive her back nor dictate to her in any way, and wished to hear no more of her for the rest of his days. When he died she went into mourning like an ordinary widow; but it is true that she never resumed his arms or livery: she always used her own arms in full and without addition.

As time went on she took to giving nearly all she had to the poor. She used to employ herself for several hours a day in making shirts for them and other coarse needle-work. Any one who happened to be present was pressed into the service. She had formerly been excessively fond of good living; her table now became frugal in the extreme; her fasts were more frequent; conversation in her

circle, and the card-playing for very low stakes, which was her only amusement, were often interrupted by a summons to prayer at all hours of the day. She would leave her occupations to pray in her private room. Her penances were continual; her chemises and sheets were of the roughest and coarsest stuff, but she concealed them under others of the usual materials. She always wore a belt with iron points, which often caused sores, and bracelets and garters similarly garnished. Her tongue, once so formidable, was also kept under restraint. She was so terrified at the thought of death that she kept several women in her pay whose sole duty was to sit up with her at night. She slept with her curtains undrawn, and many lighted candles in the room; and every time she woke up she expected to find her watchers conversing or eating, so as to make sure that they did not fall asleep.

With all this, she never laid aside the attributes of royalty which she had usurped in the days of her favour, and people had become so accustomed to them that no one found fault. Her arm-chair was placed with its back to the foot of her bed, and it was the only one in the room; none of her children were allowed one, not even the Duchess of Orleans. Monsieur and the Grande Mademoiselle had always been fond of her, and went to see her rather frequently. For them arm-chairs were brought in, and also for Madame la Princesse; but she never rose from her own to receive them, nor did she ever reconduct them. Madame did not understand being treated in this way, and hardly ever went there. Her manner of receiving persons of less distinction may be easily surmised. There were a number of little chairs with backs, mingled with folding-seats, drawn up on each side of her arm-chair for her guests, and for the ladies who lived with her; namely, her nieces, and poor ladies of good family, married and unmarried, who did the honours for her.

All France used to visit her; it had come, I do not know how, to be considered a duty to go there from time to time; the ladies of the Court went, as a mark of respect, to her daughters; but few men, unless on some particular business, or on ceremonial occasions. When she spoke to any one it was in the style of a Queen holding her Court, who confers a high honour on any one whom she addresses. No one, no matter what his position might be, approached

her except with an air of profound respect ; and she never paid visits herself, not even to Monsieur, Madame, the Grande Mademoiselle, or to the Hôtel de Condé. There was an unmistakable air of distinction about her house, and it was never without a confused throng of carriages before the door.

Up to the last moment of her life she was perfectly beautiful ; and, though she always fancied that she was ill and going to die, she was never really unwell. This uneasiness about her health was the cause of her frequent journeys ; and wherever she went she took seven or eight ladies to keep her company. She herself was the best company in the world ; she had a charm of manner which caused her haughty airs to be overlooked, and seemed to combine well with them. There never was anything like her conversation ; it was an incomparable mixture of wit, eloquence, and the most delicate politeness. She had such an odd way of putting things, and such a natural genius for hitting off the right expression, that she seemed to have a language peculiar to herself. This language was quite delightful ; it was picked up by her nieces and other ladies who associated with her habitually, so that to this day one recognises it unmistakably in the few persons remaining of that set. It was the language natural to her family ; her brother and her sisters all shared it.

Her work of piety—or perhaps I should say her whim—was to arrange marriages for people, especially for young girls ; and, as her lavish alms-giving did not leave her much to give by way of dowry, the matches she made up were often very impecunious ones. After she left the Court she never condescended to ask for anything, either for herself or others : no Minister, Intendant, or Judge ever received applications from her. The last time she went to the baths of Bourbon (without the slightest necessity, as she often did) she paid all her charitable pensions for two years in advance, and doubled her usual alms. She had a good many pensioners, chiefly impoverished persons of noble birth. Although, as she herself admitted, she felt perfectly well, she had a presentiment that she would not return from this journey ; and she advanced the payment of the pensions so that these poor people might have time to seek some means of livelihood. Indeed, she was always preparing for death ; and yet, with all her fears and her

night-watchers, her household never included a physician, nor even a surgeon. Perhaps this circumstance enables us to see how she reconciled her reflections on her approaching end with the far-off ambition of becoming Madame de Maintenon's successor, if the King should again be free.

Her children looked forward to this event, with the exception of M. du Maine, who would not have been a gainer by it. In the inner circles of the Court it was considered so far from being impossible that the eagerness of the Noailles for a marriage between one of their daughters and d'Antin's eldest son was attributed to no other reason. Allied as they were with Madame de Maintenon by their son's marriage with her niece, it seemed at first sight as if a connection with Madame de Montespan would not suit them, on account of Madame de Maintenon's hatred and jealousy of her, which she kept up with a rancour she never showed towards any one else. But this powerful consideration did not deter the Noailles; and they profited by the alliance to pay court to Madame de Montespan as to a person from whom something might be expected. They took the opportunity of this journey to Bourbon to ask her to allow their daughter, the Maréchale de Cœuvres, who was childless, to accompany her on the footing of a daughter; that is to say, she lived entirely with Madame de Montespan, and used her carriages. The Maréchale took great pains to please the persons of her suite, no matter how humble their position might be, and behaved to Madame de Montespan herself with far more respect than she ever showed to the Duchess of Burgundy or Madame de Maintenon. Madame de Montespan received her homage like a queen; she treated her like a doll, sent her away when she bothered her, and used very plain language to her. The Maréchale swallowed it all quite meekly, and only became more flattering and servile.

Madame de Saint-Simon and Madame de Lausun were at Bourbon when Madame de Montespan arrived there. I have already explained that she was a second cousin of my mother's, and procured for her the appointment of Lady of the Palace to the Queen, which my father would not allow her to accept. Madame de Montespan always treated my mother with marked affection, and would always see her at any time. My mother and Madame de Saint-Simon used to visit her from time to time at St.

Joseph ; so that when she found Madame de Saint-Simon at Bourbon she showed her a good deal of affectionate kindness (I hardly like to say that she treated her with distinction), with that dignified air which she always retained. The Maréchale de Cœuvres was so jealous that she could not refrain from showing it, and people used to laugh at her. I relate these trifles because they prove that the notion of Madame de Montespan becoming Madame de Maintenon's successor, chimerical as it might seem, was seriously entertained by persons quite in the inner circles of the Court.

In the midst of all this, Madame de Montespan was taken so ill one night that her watchers were obliged to call for help. The Maréchale de Cœuvres was one of the first to arrive. Finding Madame de Montespan almost suffocated and her head confused, she took upon herself to administer an emetic ; but the effect produced was so violent that they were frightened, and stopped it ; and this perhaps cost her her life. She took advantage of a short interval of ease to confess and receive the Sacraments. Before doing so she sent for all her servants, even the humblest, and in their presence made a confession of her public sins ; asked forgiveness for the scandal she had so long occasioned, and even for her ill-temper,—all with such profound humility that nothing could be more edifying. After this she received the last Sacraments with fervent piety. The fear of death, which had haunted her throughout her life, suddenly vanished, and troubled her no more. She thanked God for having allowed her to die in a place where she was far removed from the children she had borne in sin ; and this was the only time she mentioned them during her illness. Though her attendants still flattered her with hopes of recovery, she turned her thoughts only to eternity, and to her condition as a sinner whose fears were relieved by a pious trust in God's mercy. She showed no regret at leaving the world ; all her thoughts were bent on making her sacrifice more pleasing to God ; everything she did, to the last, was marked by gentleness and peace of mind.

A courier had been despatched to d'Antin, who arrived shortly before the end. She looked at him, and said she was now in a situation very different from that in which he had formerly seen her at Bellegarde. As soon as she

expired d'Antin went back to Paris, having given orders about the funeral ; and they must have been very strange ones, or they were very strangely carried out. Madame de Montespan's body, once so perfect, became a prey to the clumsy and ignorant surgeon in attendance on the wife of Le Gendre, Intendant of Montauban, who had come to take the waters, and who died herself shortly afterwards. The obsequies were left to the care of the lowest servants, the rest of the household having suddenly deserted. The Maréchale de Cœuvres, with some of Madame de Montespan's ladies, went at once to the Abbey of St. Menou, some leagues from Bourbon, the Abbess of which was a niece of Father de la Chaise. The corpse was left for a long time in the doorway of the house while a most indecent dispute about precedence went on between the Canons of the Sainte-Chapelle and the priests of the parish. It was deposited temporarily in the parish church, like that of any local citizen's wife ; it was not till some time afterwards that it was taken to Poitiers, in a disgracefully parsimonious manner, and laid in the tomb belonging to her own family. Madame de Montespan was deeply lamented by the poor of the province, and by many other persons whom she had assisted.

D'Antin was at Livry, where Monseigneur was staying for a night for hunting, when the messenger from Bourbon reached him. Before he left for that place he sent to Marly to inform his mother's natural children. The Count de Toulouse told the King, and asked leave to go to his mother, which was at once granted ; but he had only got as far as Montargis when he met another courier bringing the news of her death, and went back to hide his grief at Rambouillet. Nothing could exceed the grief shown by the Duchess of Orleans, Madame la Duchesse, and the Count de Toulouse. M. du Maine, on the other hand, could hardly conceal his joy ; he did not venture to shock public opinion by remaining at Marly, but he only went away for two days to Sceaux, after which he returned to Marly, and caused his brother to be sent for. Their two sisters, who had retired to Versailles, were also recalled. The grief of Madame la Duchesse was astonishing, for she had prided herself all her life on caring for no one, and even love itself, or what passed for such, had never been able to make her grieve. Even more surprising was the extreme affliction of M. le Duc, who was by nature incapable of affection, and whose pride was

ashamed of such a mother-in-law. Perhaps the explanation may be found in what I have suggested regarding the hopes for the future, which were all at an end through the death of Madame de Montespan.

It would naturally be supposed that Madame de Maintenon, delivered from a former mistress whom she had supplanted and driven from the Court, would regard her death as a relief, for she had never been able to overcome an uneasy jealousy with regard to her. But it was not so; when she heard the news she was overcome by remorse, remembering how much she owed to Madame de Montespan, and how badly she had requited her; she could not restrain her tears, and for want of a better refuge went to hide them on her close-stool. The Duchess of Burgundy, who followed her there, was speechless with astonishment at her grief; she was no less surprised by the perfect insensibility of the King, considering how passionately he had loved Madame de Montespan for so many years. She could not refrain from saying something about it to him; he replied, with great tranquillity, that when he parted from her he never expected to see her again, and that she had been dead ever since, so far as he was concerned. From this it may be supposed that he was not very well pleased at the sorrow shown by her children; but, though they were very much afraid of him, they let their grief take its course, and it lasted long. The whole Court went to visit them, without speaking; it was a rather curious sight.

Another rather singular thing was a contrast between them and the Princess of Conti, which was very humiliating for them. She was in mourning for her aunt, Madame de la Vallière, who had lately died. The daughters of the King by Madame de Montespan did not venture to wear mourning for a mother who had not been recognised; all they could do was to appear in *négligé*, without ornaments, and deny themselves all amusements, even card-playing, which the Count de Toulouse also gave up for a long time. I have thought the life and conduct of this celebrated mistress after her retirement sufficiently interesting to justify this long digression; moreover, the effect produced by her death seems to throw some light on the character of our Court.

D'Antin felt his release from the necessity of rendering filial duties to his imperious mother more than the loss of the pecuniary assistance which she had given him since she

took to devotion. For the sake of this assistance, and also in order to please his bastard sisters and the Count de Toulouse, who were devoted to their mother, he had shown her more attention than he would have done otherwise. But, though her repentance had made her more liberal to him, her heart never really went out to the son she had borne to her husband ; it was entirely given to her other children. She thought it right to restrain her feelings towards them, but this only increased her coldness towards d'Antin. It was an effort to her to do anything for him. Her conduct was such as to excuse some ill-temper on his part ; moreover, any one but d'Antin would have felt that his mother had disgraced him and his family, and this would have been an additional motive for feeling some relief at her death ; but such a sentiment was not in his character.

He had a great deal of native wit ; to his mother's delightful way of talking he added a touch of the Gascon, derived from his father ; the result was a combination full of charm and natural grace. In his younger days he was perfectly handsome, and he retained his good looks in a great degree to the end of his life ; it was a manly sort of beauty, and his countenance was full of intelligence. No one could be more agreeable. He had a great intuitive knowledge of character ; no one better understood the art of captivating men, and insinuating himself into their confidence. He could adapt his conversation to each person he talked to, and express exactly the sentiments he wished to hear. He was very well informed, with an excellent memory, and talents which fitted him for any position ; he was not without some knowledge of literature. His mental powers were assisted by a robust body equal to any calls he made upon it ; and, though he gradually became extremely stout, he never spared himself either watching or fatigue when necessary.

His natural disposition was rough and overbearing ; but his desire to please had made him subdue it, so that he always appeared gentle and polite ; and he was never by any chance heard to say a bad word for anybody. A spendthrift by nature, he sacrificed everything to ambition and his desire for riches. He was the cleverest and most artful courtier of his day, and he played his part with an assiduity which was perfectly incomprehensible. For more than twenty years he persevered, lavishing attentions and flatteries wherever he thought they might be useful ; giving

himself infinite trouble to be everywhere at once ; doing nothing without an object (and he had a variety of objects in view). Nothing escaped him ; no trouble was too great for him, nothing discouraged him ; and yet all he gained by it was the familiarity which his Gascon impudence had usurped with certain persons from whom it was advisable, as he shrewdly perceived, to extract favours by force when the opportunity presented itself. It was in this way that he dealt with Monseigneur, whose *menin* he was, and to whom his marriage had given him still closer access. He had married the eldest daughter of the Duke d'Uzès by the only daughter of the Duke de Montausier ; and, though her conduct was not very regular, it did not prevent him from living on cordial and affectionate terms with her and her whole family. His expenditure on his table and equipages was at all times prodigious ; he was kept afloat for a long time by his winnings at play. He played very high ; when he lost he always paid punctually and without disputes ; he was skilful at all games, and lucky in those of chance ; but he was strongly suspected of assisting his good luck.

He was very humble in his behaviour to his mother's children, and bore snubs with infinite patience. We have seen how they met with a rebuff on his account when, on the occasion of his father's death, they all joined in asking the King to make him a Duke. We shall see before long what was the secret obstacle which brought to nothing the scheming and intrigues of so many years ; otherwise it would be incomprehensible that they should have produced so little effect. I have related how his mother induced him to abjure play, in return for a pension of 10,000 crowns ; how absurd the King thought his solemn announcement of the fact ; and how, two years later, he was gambling as heavily as ever. During this temporary abstinence he committed another absurdity, which was equally unsuccessful. He took to practices of devotion ; fasted rigorously and ostentatiously, which must have been a serious trial for a man of his greediness and enormous appetite ; and made a parade of going to Mass every day with great regularity. He kept this up for nearly two years ; but in the end, seeing that it led to nothing, he returned to his usual mode of life, as well as to his gambling.

He had another failing, in which he was to be pitied rather than blamed, for he could not help it, and it caused him

acute suffering : he was a coward, to such a degree that it is astonishing how he could bring himself to serve so long in the Army. He often had to put up with affronts on that account, and bore them with surprising meekness. At the siege of Brussels M. le Duc, who was barbarously malignant, saw him one day coming into the trenches to dine with him. He immediately passed the word round, and took the officers in the trench into his confidence. They had hardly sat down to dinner when the alarm was given ; the enemy was making a vigorous sortie, and preparations were hastily made for a hot and imminent combat. When M. le Duc had enjoyed his joke sufficiently, he looked at d'Antin and said : " We may as well sit down again ; the sortie was only for your benefit." D'Antin resumed his seat as if nothing had happened. At some other siege the Prince of Conti, who did not like him, was visiting the outposts, and found him in a rather advanced position. He burst into one of his great roars of laughter,¹ and called out to him : " What ! you here, d'Antin ! And you have not yet died of fright ? " He took it quite meekly, and made no difference in his behaviour to the two Princes, with whom he was on very familiar terms.

La Feuillade, who was very jealous and overbearing, made an equally gratuitous attack on him. He was at Meudon, standing within two yards of Monseigneur. I do not know how the conversation began, nor what d'Antin said, but a slight argument arose on the subject of grenadiers. All of a sudden La Feuillade, raising his voice, said : " What right have you to talk about grenadiers, I should like to know ? where would you have seen any ? " D'Antin attempted to reply, but La Feuillade broke in again : " And, for my part, I have often seen them in places which you would not have dared to approach by a very long way ! " D'Antin held his tongue, and the remainder of the company were stupefied. Monseigneur pretended not to hear ; he said afterwards that, if he had appeared to notice what had passed, he had no alternative but to have La Feuillade thrown out of the window for such a gross act of disrespect in his presence. The incident passed off quite quietly, and nothing came of it. In short, it had come to be considered unworthy of a gentleman to insult d'Antin.

¹ Saint-Simon says elsewhere that the Prince of Conti's laugh sounded like a bray.

It was a thousand pities, it must be confessed, that he had this disgraceful failing; for otherwise it would have been hard to find a man better qualified to command an army. He had the parts of a great General; his perception and insight were accurate, his designs well conceived, and on a grand scale; he had in a singular degree the gift of arranging marches and organising everything which appertained to the supplies of an army; in matters of discipline he was without pedantry, keeping his attention fixed only on essential points; he was indefatigable in obtaining information, and spent immense sums in paying spies. These qualities made him a most useful assistant to a General commanding in chief; Marshal de Villeroy and M. de Vendôme employed him with great advantage to themselves. He always had one or two draughtsmen employed in sketching and surveying the country, and gathering what information they could respecting the position, marches, and foraging parties of the enemy. Though he had so many cares and occupations, at Court as well as with the army, and gave them his unremitting attention, he never seemed worried or put out; his head was always clear and unembarrassed; he was completely master of himself, both in mind and body.

Always charming in society, with a cheerful and pleasant manner peculiar to himself, he was courteous to the officers and popular with the private soldiers, among whom, using tact and discretion, he distributed a good deal of money; he had a free, unaffected way of talking to people, and always said the right thing to everybody. He was full of resource, never at a loss, always ready to smooth away difficulties, and thoroughly capable of undertaking any kind of business. Altogether he was certainly a very remarkable man; but it is not only for this reason that I have spoken of him at such length; I thought it as well to take this opportunity of describing the character of a courtier who, up to the present, had been left out in the cold, but was now about to become a personage of importance for the remainder of his days.

D'Antin, who was more remarkable for sound judgement than for bravery or a keen sense of honour, had never expected that his mother would become Madame de Maintenon's successor; he never even wished her to do so. He saw that her ambition was a mere chimera, and he felt that if, by some extraordinary chance, it did come to anything, her natural children would be the only gainers; and he

might consider himself fortunate if he were allowed to pick up the crumbs that fell from their table. He had divined the cause of all his disappointments ; he perceived that it was Madame de Maintenon who had been the insuperable obstacle to the advancement of the legitimate son of her former mistress. Now that his mother was no more, he flattered himself that her enemy would drop her opposition, and that he would be able to fly on his own wings, instead of being supported by his natural brothers and sisters ; for though, up to the present, he had not been able to do without their assistance, he felt the shame of relying on it. The exaggerated mourning which he assumed in order to please them could not conceal the relief which he really felt, either from them or from the world at large. On the other hand, seeing the insensibility of the King, he did not wish to offend him or his mother's enemy by too marked a show of affliction.

The difficulty of reconciling two such contradictory objects betrayed him ; and society, which was accustomed to show its respect for Madame de Montespan to an absurd degree, did not forgive her son for taking to card-playing again immediately after her death, which he did, pleading the excuse that he was obliged to do so as one of Monseigneur's party. The indecency of the arrangements for the funeral, and the stinginess of his gifts to his mother's servants, who lost everything by her death, caused a great outcry against him. He tried to allay it after the Gascon fashion, by a few handsome presents to some of the oldest servants. He went so far as to give M. du Maine a beautiful diamond, which, he said, he knew he valued, and which his mother had destined for him. M. du Maine accepted it ; but sent it back next day in obedience to superior orders.

All this was nothing compared with the affair of the will. It was shown that Madame de Montespan had made one long ago ; she mentioned it on her death-bed, but without saying where it was, apparently because it was in one of the cases which she had with her ; or perhaps because, as was generally supposed, Father de la Tour had it in his custody. However, the will could not be found ; and when Father de la Tour returned from a round of official visits he declared it was not in his possession, though he did not say that he knew nothing about it. That confirmed the general opinion that there had been one, and that it had been taken away or destroyed. There was a great

hubbub about it ; Madame de Montespan's servants, and all the persons who had been living with her, complained bitterly ; for they had counted on legacies which would prevent their losing absolutely everything. Her children were indignant at these strange proceedings, and spoke to d'Antin on the subject. He must have expected something of the sort ; but he merely shrugged his shoulders and let the storm go by. He had got all he wanted, and he flattered himself that when their first grief had abated their anger would pass away too.

Their common loss brought about a temporary reconciliation between the Duchess of Orleans and Madame la Duchesse. It was some time before they got over their grief ; when they did so there was an end to the reunion between the two sisters, and also to one which it had brought about between Madame la Duchesse and the Princess of Conti. They all fell back into their old way of behaving to each other, and resumed their usual habits in society. D'Antin did not obtain the forgiveness of his mother's children quite so easily or so soon as he had expected, but in the end all was smoothed over and forgotten. Such is the way of the world.

The Duchess de Nemours died very soon after Madame de Montespan, and her death made even more noise in the world, though for different reasons. She was the only daughter of the last Duke de Longueville, by his first marriage with the eldest daughter of the Count de Soissons. His second wife was the sister of M. le Prince, the hero ; she was the famous Madame de Longueville who played such a prominent part in the troubles of the minority of Louis XIV. By her he had two sons ; the elder, who was not right in his head, became a priest : the younger, known as the Count de Saint-Paul, was killed, unmarried, at the passage of the Rhine in 1672.

Madame de Nemours' personal appearance was very singular, and her style of dressing equally so ; she had large eyes which saw nothing, a convulsive twitch of one shoulder, and her white hair was always hanging about untidily ; nevertheless, she always looked extremely dignified. She was haughty to the last degree, with abundance of wit and a lively and eloquent tongue, which she made no attempt to restrain. She lived in one half of the Hôtel de Soissons, and Madame de Carignan in the other ; with whom she

often quarrelled, though she was her mother's sister, and a Princess of the Blood.

To the hatred of the branch of Condé which she had inherited from her mother she added that which children of a first marriage often feel towards a stepmother. She could not forgive Madame de Longueville for some ill-treatment which she said she had received from her ; still less could she forgive the two Princes of Condé for having deprived her of the guardianship and property of her half-brother, or the Prince of Conti for having won his case against her in the matter of the disputed will. When she began on these topics there was no stopping her ; she poured out a stream of witty and amusing sarcasms, without the slightest respect for the position of a Prince of the Blood. She was no fonder of her natural heirs, the Gondis and Mattignons. She did contrive, however, to live on decent terms with the Dowager-Duchess de Lesdiguières and Marshal and the Maréchale de Villeroy ; but, as for the Mattignons, she would not let their name be pronounced in her presence.

The elder of her father's two aunts had married the eldest son of the Marshal Duke de Retz ; the younger had married the second son of Marshal de Mattignon ; but, whereas the elder had married with the full consent of her family, the younger had made a love-match without their knowledge ; and none of the Longuevilles would forgive her, or see her, till after many years had elapsed ; nor was any Longueville ever on friendly terms with the Mattignons. The Duke de Retz, son of the elder of these sisters, left only two daughters ; one married Pierre Gondi, her father's cousin, and left an only daughter married to the Duke de Lesdiguières ; the other married the Duke de Brissac, by whom she had only two children—my brother-in-law and the Maréchale de Villeroy. The other aunt, who made the clandestine marriage, was grandmother of the Count and the last Marshal de Mattignon, who were both living at the time of Madame de Nemours' death ; and they, with the Maréchale de Villeroy, were her natural heirs.

Madame de Nemours was thoroughly consistent in her animosity ; one day when she was talking to the King at a window in his private room, her great short-sighted eyes were sufficiently sharp to perceive Mattignon crossing the courtyard below. She immediately spat on the ground five

or six times ; and then apologised to the King, saying that she could never help spitting when she saw a Mattignon. She was extraordinarily rich, and lived in great splendour, with much dignity ; but her temper had been so soured by her lawsuit that she could not forgive.

Somebody asked her whether she ever said the Lord's Prayer ; to which she replied that she did, but always left out the clause about the forgiveness of trespasses. It may be supposed from this that she did not let her religion put her to any inconvenience. She used herself to tell a story of how she once went to confession in a church where she was not known. Her dress and general appearance were not such as to inspire the confessor with any great respect for her ; when she began speaking of her great wealth, and of the Princes of Condé and Conti, he told her to pass on to something else. But, as she felt that her soul was in a perilous state, she insisted, and went on telling him of her great estates and her millions. The worthy man thought she was mad ; he told her to calm herself and not think of such things ; he advised her to go home, and, if she could afford it, to take some good strengthening broth. She lost her temper and made for the door ; the confessor, seeing her go, had the curiosity to follow. When he saw the supposed madwoman received by a number of equerries and waiting-women, and the magnificent equipage without which she never went out, he was almost stupefied with astonishment, and ran to beg her pardon. But she only laughed at him, and was glad to have got off her confession for that day.

Some weeks before her death she was so ill that she was urged to think seriously of her condition. At last she made up her mind ; she sent her confessor, with one of her gentlemen, to M. le Prince, the Prince of Conti, and the two Mattignons, to beg their forgiveness. They all went to see her, and she received them kindly ; but that was all she did, she left not a halfpenny to any of them. She gave everything at her disposal to the two daughters of the bastard son of the Count de Soissons, whom she had formerly appointed her heir, and who had married a daughter of Marshal de Luxembourg. Of these two daughters one died young ; the other, a great heiress, married the Duke de Luynes, and was the mother of the present Duke de Chevreuse.

Madame de Nemours was eighty-six years old when she died. Her death set all the claimants to the principality of Neufchatel in motion. The Duke de Villeroy and Mattignon started at once for Neufchatel, and the Prince of Conti for Pontarlier; the King would not allow him to expose himself to a repetition of the disrespectful treatment he had formerly experienced at Neufchatel, and at Pontarlier he was near enough to give orders and receive news. Old Madame de Mailly, mother-in-law of the Duchess of Burgundy's Lady-in-Waiting, was another pretender—rather in order to obtain more consideration for her grandson, the Marquis de Néele, than because she had any real claim. She flattered herself that Madame de Maintenon would assist her, but she was mistaken; and her chimeras were ridiculed both at Paris and in Switzerland. The claims of the Prince of Conti were founded on the will of the last Duke de Longueville, who had made him his heir in the event of his brother the Count de Saint-Paul dying without issue. Madame de Nemours had disputed this will, but lost her case. It remained to be seen whether a sovereignty could be bequeathed like ordinary property, and whether the courts of Neufchatel would defer to a judgement of the Parliament of Paris. Madame de Nemours' natural heirs claimed that Neufchatel, being a sovereign, or rather an independent, State, must pass to the heir-at-law; and that the only question was whether Mattignon or the Dowager-Duchess of Lesdiguières should succeed.

While the haughty burgesses of Neufchatel were enjoying the spectacle of all these claimants coming to their feet to implore their suffrages, a Minister of the Elector of Brandenburg suddenly made his appearance among them, to put forward a claim on behalf of his master. This claim was founded, like that of Madame de Mailly, on a descent from the House of Châlons; but it was even more remote and perplexing than hers, and only put forward by the Elector as a pretext. As I have already said, lawsuits of this nature are not decided by justice and right. The Elector's real grounds for coming forward were his religion, which was in conformity with that of the people of Neufchatel, the support of the neighbouring Protestant cantons, which he had already secured, and his fear lest the principality should fall into the possession of the King of France, as had happened with the principality of Orange. The courts of

Neufchatel issued a provisional judgement, giving their State to the Elector of Brandenburg until the conclusion of peace, and putting him into actual possession ; so that the Prince of Conti and the other claimants had to return in confusion.

Our King then awoke to the danger of allowing a powerful Protestant Sovereign to take possession of a country which he might convert into a base for attacking our weak frontier on the side of Burgundy. He sent orders to Puysieux to go to Neufchatel and use all means in his power, even menaces, to exclude the Elector ; at the same time declaring himself perfectly neutral so far as the other claimants were concerned. It was too late ; the cantons were pledged to support the Elector, and the Ministers of England and Holland published a warm reply to Puysieux's threatening despatch. The Elector of Brandenburg entered peaceably into possession of Neufchatel, which was confirmed to him at the general peace, and which he still retains.¹

Neither the King nor Monseigneur wore mourning for Madame de Nemours, nor, consequently, did the Court, although she was the daughter of a Princess of the Blood. The Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, however, did go into mourning, on account of her connection with the House of Savoy.

Cardinal d'Arquien died at Rome about the same time ; his history is so singular that it is worthy of a short digression. He was born in 1613 ; his family name was La Grange. He was a clever man, very agreeable, and received in the best society, in which he was helped a good deal by the Duke de Saint Aignan and his sister the Countess de Béthune, Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Maria-Theresa, whose mother was his first cousin. He was given the command of Monsieur's cavalry regiment, and was Captain of the Hundred Swiss. He had married a La Châtre, who died in 1672, leaving him a son and five daughters, of whom two became nuns. Finding it difficult to procure husbands for the others, he let himself be persuaded by the Polish Ambassador, a friend of his, to establish them in that country. The Ambassador was returning to Poland ; La Grange went with him, and soon after their arrival the Ambassador arranged a marriage between one of the daughters and Jacob Radzivil, Prince of

¹ This Prussian claim to Neufchatel gave rise to a serious dispute so lately as 1857.

Zamoski. She was soon left a widow without children, and so rich that John Sobieski married her in 1665.

Sobieski, whose inclinations were altogether French, was at that time the most distinguished man in Poland, to the throne of which country he was unanimously elected in 1674. His wife's elder sister had refused to marry a foreigner; the relationship and close friendship which existed between her father and Madame de Béthune caused them in 1669 to arrange a marriage for her with the Marquis de Béthune; and the King gave her the reversion of her mother-in-law's office of Lady-in-Waiting. When her sister became Queen of Poland her husband was sent as special Ambassador to congratulate the newly elected King. He only returned for a short visit, during which he was made a knight of the Order, and then went back to Poland; where he remained, much liked and esteemed, till his death in 1692. His two sons obstinately refused the Cardinalate on the nomination of the King of Poland, and returned to starve in France; the elder was killed at the battle of Blenheim; the younger lived in obscurity. Madame de Béthune died at Paris at the age of eighty-nine or ninety.

King John Sobieski had covered himself with glory by his victories over the Turks and the Tartars, both before and after his election; he put the crown to his achievements by saving Germany. He led an army in person to attack the Turks, who were besieging Vienna and very nearly took it; he completely defeated them, and saved Vienna, with a great part of Hungary, for which the hero received very little thanks. This was in 1683; his enormous corpulence and the circumstances of the time prevented him from gaining any further distinction in war. He died at Warsaw in 1696, at the age of seventy-two.

The Queen of Poland was not nearly so French in her leanings as the King her husband. Transported with joy at finding a crown on her head, she longed ardently to show herself in her own country, which she had left as a very obscure private person. The Court of France had promoted her husband's election very zealously; it was on account of his services in procuring it that the King of Poland gave his nomination to Cardinal de Janson, the French Ambassador. No objection was raised, therefore, at our Court to a journey which the Queen proposed to make to Bourbon, on the pretext of taking the waters; but when it had been

publicly announced, and everything was prepared, she was warned that the Queen of France would not give her "the hand." It is strange that she should not have known it before; in old times Kings never received "the hand" from ours, and no elective King had ever dreamt of such a thing. Nevertheless, she was as angry as if she had received an insult. She broke off her journey, joined herself to the Court of Vienna and the enemies of France, and used all her influence over the King her husband, which was very considerable, to make him oppose France in every way. Afterwards she tried to conciliate our Court, for she wished very much to get her father created a Duke and peer; but she had given too many causes for displeasure, and her request was constantly refused. Long afterwards, in 1694, she obtained the Order for him; and the following year he received the Cardinal's Hat on the nomination of his son-in-law.

He was eighty-two years of age when he became a Cardinal, had never taken any Orders nor held any benefice, and boasted that he had never read his breviary. He was very brisk long after that age, and kept women, to the great displeasure of the Queen, his daughter. After the death of John Sobieski she left Poland, where she was detested for her avarice, and carried off her treasures to Rome, where she lived with her father. While there she claimed to have the same honours as had formerly been accorded to Queen Christina of Sweden; she was informed that there was no equality between an elective and an hereditary Queen, and she was made to feel the distinction. This exposed her to so many mortifications that she only waited for her father's death to escape from a place which had become disagreeable to her. He died on the 24th of May, 1707, at the age of ninety-six, after a very short illness, previous to which he had enjoyed all his faculties of body and mind. His daughter, as we shall soon see, carried out the plans which she had proposed to herself.

Vaillac died about the same time. He was one of the best cavalry Generals the King had, and would have gone far if he had not rendered his talents useless by drunkenness, debauchery, and love of low company. He could carry a great deal of wine; he used to make his company drunk, and afterwards get dead drunk himself. When in this condition some scoundrels married him to a common woman,

without any banns or regular contract. When he had slept off the effects of wine he was much astonished to find this creature by his side. She took the high hand, and announced that she was his wife. Vaillac thought he must be out of his senses, and shouted for help. The plot had been well concerted ; he could see nobody but the persons who had witnessed the marriage. He told them they were liars ; he had not the slightest recollection of it, and it had never entered his head to dishonour himself by such a marriage. There was a great stir about it, but at last these rascals saw that they would be forced to fight him, or submit to a beating ; and there was an end of the matter, which had no further consequences.

A story was told of him that, having been regaled by the magistrates of Bâle, in his character of a heavy drinker, and having vanquished them all, he called for a stirrup-cup as he was about to ride away ; a bottle and a glass being offered him, he said that was not the right way to drink a stirrup-cup, and, pulling off one of his boots, filled it with wine and drank it off. But it is a pure invention, although people have improved upon it so far as to say that the magistrates had his picture done in the act of drinking, and hung it in their town-hall.

END OF VOL. II



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A CHARGE
IS MADE FOR
REMOVED OR
DAMAGED
LABELS.

